

# THE BOOK OF MARY

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*From a lover of Wisdom,  
To Wisdom's children*

## PART 1 – THE COMING OF JESUS

### The resurrection

This is the book of Mary the Magdalene, the twin of Jesus.

It was through Mary that the truth first became known to the world. It was through Mary that Jesus became manifest. Mary was the gate of Jesus. Through her he talked and gave his message to the world. Jesus was himself the kingdom of heaven – the spirit dwelling in the flesh, the union of man and god.

Paul, writing to the Galatians, recorded how Jesus had come through a Jewish woman:

*...when the fullness of time did come, god sent forth his son, come of a woman, come under law, that those under law he may redeem ... (Galatians 4)*

Jesus was Mary's spirit. It was Mary who first saw Jesus, Mary who was first redeemed. It was Mary who recorded the things that Jesus told her and wrote them down as his sayings and parables. She recorded them in the name of Jesus because they had come from Jesus. It was Mary, a woman in a man's world, who appointed twelve male disciples to carry Jesus' teachings to the people. It was Mary who adopted a male pseudonym to disguise her sex – a tactic employed by many women throughout history. It was Mary who later chose her brother to lead her church as a figurehead while she controlled the church through him.

For thousands of years the story of Jesus has been told from the four gospels of belief; Mark, Mathew, Luke and John. In these gospels Jesus is a man, walking the earth like any other man, yet doing miracles and great deeds. He dies crucified by the Jews and Romans as a sacrifice to Yahweh, his father, in order to redeem from sin a mankind who are inherently depraved. He is resurrected on the third day into a material body. According to these gospels believing in Jesus, in his crucifixion and resurrection, saves a person and gives them eternal life. And if a person is not saved they are condemned to eternal damnation.

All these things are true. But they are not true in the way the gospels of belief understand them. For Jesus did walk the earth, not as a man, but as the spiritual twin of a woman. And the crucifixion did not take place on a cross of wood. It takes place in a time that is always now and in a space that it is always here. For man when he is born is only half born. Part of him exists unborn in darkness and that part of him is eternal and will suffer eternally in the dark unless it can be born into the light. This second rebirth takes place through the crucifixion and resurrection. But belief is not enough. A man is not reborn through simply believing. A man is reborn through the experience of the mysteries, the mysteries not of man, but of god.

The requirement for a second birth is remembered even in the gospels of belief:

*Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly I say to you, unless a person is born from above, they will not be able to see the Kingdom of God;'*

*Nicodemus said to him, 'How is a man able to be born, being old? Is he able to go into the womb of his mother a second time to be born?'*

*Jesus answered, 'Truly, I say to you, unless a person is born of water, and the Spirit, he is not able to enter into the Kingdom of God; that which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit.'" (John 3)*

The gospels of Mathew and Luke record how the Holy Spirit came down to Mary to give birth to Jesus. In the gospels this Mary is the mother of Jesus and husband of Joseph. But in reality she was Mary the Magdalene, the daughter of Joseph. For the gospel writers did not understand that Jesus was born spiritually through Mary and not physically. Thinking that Jesus was born physically they must put the moment of his birth before Mary the Magdalene's time. So in their narratives Mary fractures into two, Mary the Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus. This Mary the mother is still linked to Mary the Magdalene in John where she waits with Mary the Magdalene at the foot of the cross. But the two were originally one and it was Mary the Magdalene who was originally known as the virgin.

Little in the gospels of belief is completely true and little is completely false. The gospels of Mark, Mathew and Luke were all written by outsiders. The authors were not among the 'perfected' those who possessed the spirit and who had entered into the kingdom of god. They took the stories they had been taught, not understanding their true meaning, and tried to weave them into a consistent narrative. But the stories they had were only the outer mysteries of the Jesus movement. They were faithful to the truth as they knew it, but their truth was not the whole. As the author of Mark wrote:

*And when he was alone, those who were about him with the twelve asked him about the parable. And he said to them, "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to those on the outside all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest they may turn, and their sins may be forgiven them." (Mark 4)*

The author of Mark was himself one of these outsiders, trying faithfully to record the saying that had come down to him, while mutilating it through his lack of understanding. The true reason why Jesus talks in parables is not to avoid redeeming the sins of the outsiders. It is because those outsiders are not capable of the spiritual redemption and so must tread the path of faith and works. But the author of Mark cannot even understand the concept of spiritual redemption; he thinks redemption is through forgiveness of sins. So he attributes the absurd motive to Jesus of refusing to talk except in parables so as not to have to redeem the sins of the undeserving.

The gospel of John is different. Perhaps the author of John had the spirit but determined to keep the secret in a gospel intended for the uninitiated. Or perhaps the final author of John was an outsider like the other gospel writers but was drawing on texts written by the initiated. For although John is a gospel of belief and works, as are the other three, there are times when the truth is very close to the surface.

In one source only is the truth preserved in a form close to its original; the Gospel of the Twin which has come down to us in the form of the Gospel of Thomas. Older than the other gospels this text preserves the secret sayings attributed to Jesus. It was available to the other gospel writers and they, although misunderstanding it, drew upon it frequently. Centuries later it was banned as heretical and was lost until dug out of the Egyptian sands at the end of the Second World War. Yet even Thomas is a corrupted version of the original for it has been translated and mistranslated and it has suffered from mangling and corruptions at the hands of those who preserved it. For although the Gospel of the Twin was originally revered, its esoteric sayings were understood by very few, and it gradually became less respected than the gospels of belief.

Another vital source are the genuine epistles of Paul. Written by a man whose time in the Jesus movement overlaps with Mary and written long before the gospels they are the only valid first hand accounts of the early church. Yet even these epistles are veiled and difficult. For Paul's teachings are deeply blasphemous and he possess knowledge that is scandalous to his own cause. Most of his congregation do not themselves possess the spiritual resurrection and like the authors of the gospels of belief are outsiders. Their fragile belief must be protected by hiding from them the inner mysteries. And Paul is playing a deeper game yet, a game against Yahweh and his angels no less. For all these reasons he often gives his message in passages which have two meanings – one for the outsiders and one for the pneumatic elect.

The Gnostics understood that Paul was one of their number and that he often disguised Gnostic truths in passages with an apparently different meaning. Like the mainstream churches the Gnostics can trace their roots back to the start of Christianity. But unlike the churches of faith and works the Gnostics always practised the route to salvation through knowledge or Gnosis. Later they fragmented into many sects and many of these became decadent. Perhaps few of the Gnostics themselves ever truly knew the spirit. Branded heretics by the mainstream church, the churches of gnosis were prosecuted and dismembered when the Christian church became the official religion of the Roman Empire. The gospel of Thomas was rediscovered as part of a collection of Gnostic

scriptures. Bound immediately after it was another fascinating text, the Gospel of Phillip, which was dated much later than the Gospel of Thomas, but which may preserve early traditions.

A major source of information about the Gnostics is the writings of their opponents. Several Church fathers wrote extensively against the Gnostics and their writings are an important source of information about Gnostic beliefs. On the subject of the birth of Jesus through Mary there were some very different traditions among the Gnostics. For example Hyppolitus records that some disciples of the great Gnostic teacher Valentinus believed that Jesus came into existence spiritually through the descent of the Holy Spirit into Mary:

*The Orientals, on the other hand, of whom is Axionicus and Bardesianes, assert that the body of the Saviour was spiritual; for there came upon Mary the Holy Spirit ... (Hyppolitus Refutation of all Heresies book 6)*

Tertullian also writing against the Valentinians records what seems to him an absurd idea; that the Valentinians believed that Jesus came into existence through Mary and yet had not been born of her.

*He was produced by means of a virgin, rather than of a virgin! On the ground that, having descended into the virgin rather in the manner of a passage through her than of a birth by her, He came into existence through her, not of her--not experiencing a mother in her, but nothing more than a way. (Tertullian: Against Valentinians)*

These accounts preserve the tradition that Jesus had come into existence as a spirit through Mary. The gospels of Mathew and Luke have many stories about the nativity. Stories about Magi following a star to the baby Jesus and presenting the carpenter and his wife with incredibly valuable presents, stories about shepherds and angels. These are stories to engage children, mythical accretions of the type that often attach to the infancy of great men. They do not exist in Mark or John and the antecedents to some of these stories have been found in Jewish literature.

In Mathew and Luke the Mary who gives birth to Jesus is a virgin. Whether or not Mary Magdalene was a virgin (and she may well have been), it is easy to see where this came from. Jesus was born by the holy spirit descending into Mary and not through conception by a man. This is the point the gospel writers are trying to make. Believing that the birth of Jesus was physical they do so through the absurd idea of a virgin giving physical birth. In the Gospel of the Twin there was a saying that also refers to the non-physical birth of Jesus:

*A woman [...] said to him: Blessed is the womb which bore thee, and the breasts which nourished thee. He said to her: Blessed is that womb which has not conceived, and those breasts which have not given suck.*

This saying rejects the idea that Jesus was born physically and gives a cryptic clue that he came into existence non-physically through a woman.

The saying is not in its original form in the Gospel of Thomas. It has suffered additions that have certainly been taken from Luke. The author of Luke did not understand the meaning of the original saying and split it into two to bring out his own interpretation. The second part Luke interpreted as being a prophecy of the times that will come before the second coming. This is a theme that is alien to the Gospel of Thomas but dear to the writers of the gospels of belief. He took this second part of the saying, the part that was spoken by Jesus, and put it into Jesus' mouth as he was being led to crucifixion -

*But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts which never gave suck. (Luke 23)*

He was left with the first part. To this he attaches an ending almost identical to one that he had already used as part of another saying from the Gospel of Thomas about Jesus' brothers and mother waiting for him (in reality the brothers and mother of Mary). This gives the saying in Luke spoken by a woman in the crowd -

*And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said to him, Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts which you have sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. (Luke 11)*

Hundreds of years later the meaning of the original saying had been lost and a scribe wrote in the margin of a copy of the Gospel of Thomas the meaning of the two parts of the saying as given in the popular Gospel of Luke. A later copyist then incorporated these marginal comments into the saying, a common occurrence in the days when manuscripts had to be copied by hand. This gave the Gospel of Thomas saying in the form that has come down to us:

*A woman in the crowd said to him: Blessed is the womb which bore thee, and the breasts which nourished thee. He said to her: Blessed are they who have heard the word of the Father and have kept it in truth. For there shall be days when you will say: Blessed is that womb which has not conceived, and those breasts which have not given suck.*

How exactly was Jesus born through Mary? In the same way that any person is reborn in the spirit – through the crucifixion and the resurrection. In the Gospel of John, on the eve of his crucifixion Jesus makes the equivalence between the passion and birth explicit:

*“The woman, when she gives birth, has sorrow, because her hour did come, but when she has given birth no more does she remember the anguish, because of the joy that a person was born to the world.” (John 16)*

The moment when Jesus first came to Mary the Magdalene is the most sacred moment in all Christianity. The story was preserved and told from person to person. Around it was written the passion narrative of the gospels of belief.

It occurred under the rule of the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate (AD 26-36). Later the tellers of the stories that were to merge into the passion narrative misunderstood this. They thought that because it occurred under his rule it must have been ordered by Pontius Pilate, the brutal Roman governor of Judea. But this is one crime of which Pontius Pilate was innocent. There was no physical crucifixion. The crucifixion existed in the mind of Mary the Magdalene and in the spiritual reality her mind was accessing.

In the gospels the resurrection is at the end but in truth it was the beginning. The resurrection stories in the gospels record the moment Jesus first appeared to Mary. The resurrection took place before the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus was the god-man nailed to an upright post (the Greek word is *Stauros*) by demonic beings. Mary stood at the foot of the stake, as all women must, and witnessed the suffering of her Christ. She went down to the tomb with him, as all women must, to anoint her lord even in death.

And then she became the first witness to the resurrection. She saw her spirit. She saw him as a young man dressed as a bridegroom in white. She saw him shining in beauty, strength and power.

This moment is recalled in the gospels. All the accounts agree that it was not Jesus that Mary saw first, but an angelic like being. This is the remembrance of her spirit. In most of the gospels other women accompany her but these are mostly other identities of 'Mary' such as Mary the mother of Jesus. Mary was alone and saw her spirit not in a real tomb but in a deep meditative trance.

The simplest and oldest account is in the Gospel of Mark:

*And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were afraid. And he said to them, "Be not afraid. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goes before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said to you." And they went out quickly, and fled from the tomb; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. (Mark 16)*

This passage was originally the end of Mark. The truth must be seen by looking through the novelistic distortions the author has introduced to make the story fit his narrative. The young man dressed in white is the spirit of Mary.

The spirit grew within Mary and became strong. She sought solitude so that in meditation she could experience his reality more completely. He worked through her, and she walked with him. The world became almost unbearable beautiful and luminous. Then came the dawning realisation that he, her spirit, was also Jesus.

Why did she not recognise him from the start? For Jesus as the god-man redeemer had to exist for Mary before she saw him. But this existence was in her imagination. It was in her imagination that Jesus was hung on the stake. It was in her imagination that he had died. But when she saw her spirit this was not imagination but her new found faculty of inner sight. The spirit did not correspond to her imagined Jesus and it took her time to recognise that they were the same. An account of this process is found in John:

*At this, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, Woman, why do you weep? Whom do you seek? She, supposing him to be the gardener, said to him, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned herself, and said to him, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher. Jesus said to her, Do not touch me; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (John 20)*

The essential elements are that Jesus originally appeared in a form that Mary did not recognise. Later she understands that this is Jesus. In this account Jesus is clearly spiritual – ‘do not touch me’ he says. The spirit ascends to the Father on death. In the gospels the period in which Jesus was among the disciples before his ascension was forty days. In reality it was many years.

A woman’s spirit appears to her as a bridegroom, her brother and her husband. A woman’s spirit leads her to life. Mary told a story about this in the Gospel of the Twin:

*Simon Peter said to them: Let Mary go out from among us, for women are not worthy of the life. Jesus said: Look, I will lead her that I may make her male, in order that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

The spirit is the living god inside. The spirit shines with the light of the father. The spirit is the ultimate value and contains all other values. The spirit is both us and god.

An example of a woman’s spirit appearing in male form is recounted in Irenaeus’ ‘Against Heresies’. He is writing against the Gnostic teacher Marcus and in his condemnation of Marcus records some of his practises. Marcus would offer a cup of wine to a female disciple and say these words:

*"May that Chaffs who is before all things, and who transcends all knowledge and speech, fill thine inner man, and multiply in thee her own knowledge, by sowing the grain of mustard seed in thee as in good soil."*

The inner man is the woman's spirit. Marcus talks also about the receipt of the spirit thus:

*"I am eager to make thee a partaker of my Charis, since the Father of all doth continually behold thy angel before His face. Now the place of thy angel is among us: it behoves us to become one. Receive first from me and by me the gift of Chaffs. Adorn thyself as a bride who is expecting her bridegroom, that thou mayest be what I am, and I what thou art. Establish the germ of light in thy nuptial chamber. Receive from me a spouse, and become receptive of him, while thou art received by him. Behold Charis has descended upon thee; open thy mouth and prophesy."*

The spirit has often been perceived as an angel. But as Marcus says "Now the place of the angel is among us: it behoves us to become one". The woman adorns herself as a bride to receive her bridegroom. The bridegroom, her spouse is her angel spirit.

Mary's bridegroom was Jesus himself. The following words are from the Gospel of the Twin:

*They said [to him]: Come, let us pray today and fast. Jesus said: What then is the sin that I have done, or in what have I been overcome? But when the bridegroom comes out from the bridal chamber, then let them fast and pray.*

If the bridegroom leaves the bridal chamber then the spirit has been lost. Then is the time for fasting, prayer and lamentations!

Mary, as the Bride of Christ, was remembered in myth form in the Gospel Of Phillip.

*There were three who always walked with the Lord: Mary, his mother, and her sister, and Magdalene, the one who was called his companion. His sister and his mother and his companion were each a Mary.*

The three were really one and the same woman. The Gospel of Phillip also says:

*And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene. [...] loved her more than all the disciples, and used to kiss her often on her mouth. The rest of the disciples [...]. They said to him "Why do you love her more than all of us?" The Saviour answered and said to them, "Why do I not love you like her? When a blind man and one who sees are both together in darkness, they are no different from one another. When the light comes, then he who sees will see the light, and he who is blind will remain in darkness."*

This tells us why Mary the Magdalene was special. She was the one who was able to see.



## **Mary and the coming of Jesus**

Some details of Mary's life before her resurrection later attached to Jesus. She was the daughter of Joseph and had several brothers including one called James. She was Jewish born under the law. She grew up in Galilee, probably in Capernaum. At the time of her resurrection experience she was about thirty years old placing her date of birth around that traditionally assigned to Jesus.

Mary was believed to be, at least by her followers, of the line of King David. The gospels give two different genealogies for the descent of Jesus from David. In both of these genealogies the descent is through Joseph and not Mary. In the terms of the gospels of belief this is odd since Jesus is not the son of Joseph. But it does make sense if Mary is the daughter and not the wife of Joseph.

She knew Jesus before she saw him. How did she come to this first conception of the saviour? It was from the Jewish Wisdom tradition that Jesus was first perceived. She, Wisdom, is called Sophia in Greek and by the Gnostics was called Achamoth. She existed with the father before the creation and was his helper at the creation. Long had men searched for the loving Wisdom of God. They told proverbs the answer of which was she and composed poems in praise of her. For with Wisdom a man is complete and without her he is empty. Many are her children and yet she is barren.

Achamoth is from the father, an emanation of his loving Wisdom, a bridge between man and god. Some said that the soul of man is itself a type of Achamoth. In the secret of the hearts of her disciples Achamoth whispered to those who loved her that they were not slaves of Yahweh mindlessly to obey his law, but children of the father and worthy of their inheritance. And in the secret of the depths of their meditations came to them the thought, like a glimpse out of the corner of the eye, of one who was the consort of Achamoth. A male power, a son, emanating from the father: husband and brother to Achamoth.

Being Jewish they sought support for their intuitions in the scriptures. The scriptural references to Wisdom had enabled the cult of Achamoth to develop yet there are no scriptural references to a male equivalent. Instead they found what they were searching for in the prediction of the messiah. Whereas most Jews believed that the messiah would be a man, a powerful military leader who would redeem his people and establish dominion over the world, these lovers of Wisdom interpreted the prophecies non-literally. They conceived of a mystic messiah who would establish a spiritual kingdom over mankind. This one would be the Christ – the word meaning nothing more than 'messiah'.

Who was the person who first identified the male consort of Achamoth with the Messiah? The tradition in the gospels of belief is that John the Baptist predicted the coming of the Christ and perhaps this is so. It may have been John who first identified the mystic son of god with the predictions for the Christ. Not that he would have said that the Christ

would come in the form of a man. That would have been blasphemy. Instead John would have seen him as a spiritual figure who descends to earth at the end of time to establish his kingdom upon earth. The same belief would later be held by many of the followers of Mary.

The prophecies of the coming Christ would have been absorbed eagerly by a young woman who may have been one of John's disciples - Mary the Magdalene. If she were a female disciple then she is unlikely to have had the same status as the males. Doubtless the females were expected to cook and do other chores for the group. But they were also instructed even if they themselves were not permitted to teach. The story in the gospels of Mary and Martha may go back to Mary's time as a disciple of John. The story records Mary as ignoring her household duties in order to listen to Jesus. She is scolded by Martha but defended by Jesus. This may record a tradition that Mary would often neglect her chores in order to sit at John's feet. Even though scolded by the other female disciples she is defended by the master himself. Mary's name itself may indicate she was a favourite disciple - the Magdalene. There is no reason to believe that she came from the town of Magdala any more than that Jesus came from Nazareth because he is called the Nazarene. Magdalene derives from the word for tower as does the town name of Magdala. It is a nickname or honorific title meaning Mary the Tower. Perhaps it was John himself who gave her that name. If so it testifies to a high opinion of her since tower signifies fortress like strength.

But was not Mary a prostitute? This story can probably be dismissed as a later legend. It is not in the earliest sources and was prevalent only in the Western church and not the Eastern. It may reflect the opposition between the mainstream and Gnostic forms of Christianity. In the gospels of belief Mary the Magdalene plays almost no part before the crucifixion so that her key role as the first witness of the resurrection comes as a surprise. But in the Gnostic gospels Mary is centre stage – in some cases she is portrayed as the first of the disciples and the recipient of privileged communication with Jesus. So Mary came to represent Gnosticism as well as participation of the female at the highest levels of the church. The mainstream church rejected both aspects and making her a prostitute was a convenient way of attacking both causes.

Yet there are two sayings in the Gospel of the Twin that could be interpreted to support the whoredom of Mary. One says:

*Jesus said: Teach me concerning this stone which the builders rejected; it is the corner - stone.*

Builders would reject stones that were cracked or defective. A prostitute Mary who became the cornerstone of the Jesus movement would certainly fit this saying perfectly. But another possible meaning is that Mary as a woman has been rejected from the highest levels of participation in Judaism and yet the church of god will be built upon her. Another saying is more explicit:

*Jesus said: He who shall know father and mother shall be called the son of a harlot.*

Could this refer to Mary's role as the 'mother'? Yet according to the Gnostics the true mother of man was Achamoth. She spawned the demiurge Yahweh as an abortion without the approval of her consort, and through him gave rise to the creation. Achamoth herself descended into the creation and became a 'prostitute'. So in Gnostic terms we are children of the mother, Achamoth, and so sons and daughters of a harlot.

Here perhaps is the source of confusion that Mary was a prostitute. For both Mary and Achamoth are brides of Jesus. A woman's spirit is in the form of Jesus so that the union with her spirit that takes place in the bridal chamber represents, on the spiritual plane, the union of Jesus and Achamoth. At such times a woman comes to represent Achamoth herself just as a man represents Jesus. As the supreme incarnation of Jesus, Mary became confused with Achamoth and in some stories she became a prostitute.

The circle of John the Baptist may have first recognised the mystic messiah, the Christ, as an emanation of God coming to rule at the end of time. Yet it is in the Jesus movement that the Christ becomes the redeemer figure who is crucified and brings the resurrection. He is the grain that dies and is reborn. His body is the bread and his blood is the wine. This is the stuff of the mystery religions. For the concept of Jesus, as redeemer, did not arise first with the Jews but with the Egyptians where he is known as Osiris.

The story of the flight into Egypt may recall an actual journey by Mary into Egypt. Or it might be a garbled remembrance of Jesus coming, in disguised and 'immature' form to the Egyptians. As it says in Mathew:

*... that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. (Mathew 2)*

Osiris was the brother and husband of the great Egyptian feminine deity Isis. It would have been natural for the Jews to equate Isis with Wisdom. This equation was made explicitly in the later Gnostic work Thunder: Perfect Mind:

*I am the one whose image is great in Egypt*

Isis plays a vital role in the legend of Osiris. She is the queen and sister of Osiris who ruled the land of men wisely. However his brother Set was envious against him and one day tricked him into a box secured with dark magic. In that box he was killed and the box was cast into the Nile. Isis searched long for the box and found it lodged into a tamarisk bush that has grown into a great tree. She tore open his box and wept over his body and in the form of a bird was to conceive by his spirit the god Horus who would eventually avenge Osiris. With the help of Thoth, Lord of Knowledge, the Ritual of Life was created to bring Osiris back to life – the same ritual that later be given to the Egyptians to bring men and women back to life. But Set found Osiris' body and tore it into many pieces and scattered them. Isis with the help of Nephthys searched long for the pieces and eventually with the aid of the magic of Thoth was able to bring him back to life. But one who has died may not dwell in the land of the living and Osiris was

confined to the underworld of which he became the lord. In the underworld he judges souls and decides which ones should go to the Blessed land.

The conventional Jew and the conventional Egyptian both sought to appease their gods by the dead enactment of rituals. The Jew had the law; the Egyptian had the mummification of the dead; and around each had grown a complex and prescribed body of ritual. Yet there were others, both Jew and pagan, who were not followers of the dead path of ritual but seekers of living knowledge of god. These were the Gnostics. Pagan Gnostics attaining to the secret heart of the mysteries of Osiris began to conceive of the redeemer, ascending and descending who, like Osiris, would create a new path to eternity for the soul of man. Jewish Gnostics, in deep prayer and mediation, understood that Isis was one of the many names of Wisdom, for unlike Yahweh she was not jealous but gave her bountiful love to all the peoples of the earth, although only the Jews knew her truly, and of those, only the Jewish Gnostics, followers of Wisdom, understood her innermost nature and true place in the fullness. These conceptions were brought together and some Jewish Gnostics began to perceive that the redeemer was the same as the mystic Christ, who would come at the end of time. To these the god Osiris was a pre-figuration of the Christ, a dim conception of the truth that would be revealed to his Jewish followers in all its glory.

One of these was Mary. She must have had some sense of the Christ before he came to her for otherwise she could not have penetrated his mystery so completely. If you wish to help a princess escape from imprisonment in a high tower then you tie a thread to a rock and throw it through her window. Attached to the thread is a string and attached to the string is a rope. She can pull up the thread and by it the string and by the string the rope which is heavy and strong enough to climb down. The thread is a person's belief in Jesus and his suffering, the string is the perception of the soul, the rope is the spirit and it is the spirit that brings escape into the Kingdom of Heaven and the direct experience of Jesus.

That experience came to Mary in the form of the passion and resurrection. Later she and others tried to explain the experience in myth form. Thus evolved the myth of the descent of Jesus, the myth that was the precursor to the passion story in the gospels of belief.

## **The descent of the Christ**

The descent of Christ can be reconstructed from the clues in the gospels of belief, in the letters of Paul and later Gnostic beliefs. Paul had his own idiosyncratic interpretation of Jesus Christ that differs in fundamental ways from the Gospel of Thomas so we cannot be sure that this was exactly what Mary believed in.

The great mystery of the descent of the Christ was pre-ordained before the beginning of time. It took place in this world at the appointed time. Yet in the spiritual reality there is no time and at the spiritual level the event can be experienced at all times. This is why some, such as the Egyptians, and the prophets of Israel could have a pre-conception of the event before it took place in the world. It had been revealed to these prophets that one would come in the form of a man, the Christ, who would redeem Israel and set up a new kingdom of righteousness over the world. Most Jews understood this to mean a political and military leader, a man like any other. But others interpreted this spiritually. They understood that the Christ was the son of god who would descend to Earth to rule as spiritual being over mankind. They believed he would descend from the sky in great glory accompanied by a retinue of angels. He would overthrow the armies of the Earth and establish a new heavenly rule – the Kingdom of God that is more aptly translated as the Imperial Rule of God.

Yet this is not how it happened. The mystic Christ, the Son of God, did indeed descend to earth to establish the kingdom of the father. Yet his form was glorious only to those with spiritual perception. To others who could see things only by the senses of this world he was imperceptible and the material form in which he came was lowly.

On the appointed day he descended as fire from the highest father. He was light from the first light and was splendid beyond comparison. As he fell he disguised his form so as to make his light bearable to the creatures at the lower levels. To Yahweh he took the form of his own son, and in his ignorance Yahweh thought he had conceived this marvellous being.

The Christ continued his descent until he came to the gates that guard the entry into the material world – the Gates of Hades. He now had lowly human form, dressed in a robe of light with a crown of white flowers on his head (from which was derived his title of the Nazarene meaning the crowned or wreathed one).

At the gates he comes face to face with the guardians, the demonic beings who are the Archons or Rulers of the Age. They had been appointed by Yahweh to guard mankind and jointly with the Angels of Yahweh to administer the Law. Their task is to test mankind by tempting and tormenting him and then to punish those who transgress. They are personifications of the primitive animal emotions that taunt mankind and lead him from god, emotions such as lust, greed, gluttony, ambition, cruelty, selfishness, and the drive for power. In appearance they were dark, ugly and corrupt - the true form of the

animal passions that are so seductive to mankind. They also represent death itself and their dominion is both the material world and Hades.

When these demons saw this splendid being appear before them they were confounded. They suspected that he was the Christ and feared that he had come to end their reign. Among themselves they plotted and whispered. They decided first to try and win him over by bribery.

They fawned on him and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and tempted him with a deal. They would share their power with him. He could rule as king in power and glory over the kingdoms of the world, just as those who predicted the spiritual messiah prophesied that he would. They the demons would then serve him playing the same role as they did under Yahweh – tempting men and women into disobedience and then punishing those who offended.

Christ rejects their offers. He has not come to rule alongside demons but to redeem the soul of man.

Enraged the demons insist on their rights to rule in the lower realms. If he is to proceed he must submit to their authority. Only the dead can enter the underworld and if he is to enter he must die first.

Understanding what must happen, the suffering and corruption he must endure, Christ weeps and begs of his father to be relieved of this bitter cup. Yet there is no other way he can redeem mankind and create a path for the soul out of Hades. He is perfect and guiltless of any crime, yet out of pure love he drinks the cup that is held out to him. Resigned and sorrowful he submits to the demons.

The confrontation takes place at night when the forces of darkness are strongest. The signs of that confrontation are still present in the gospels of belief even though the story has been transposed to a trial in Jerusalem in front of Jews and Romans. In Mark the High Priest asks Jesus *'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?'*. In Mathew the question is *'I adjure you, by the living God, that you tell us if you are the Christ - the Son of God.'* These are the questions the demons put to Jesus demanding to know if he is really the Christ. When he replies in the affirmative they rent their cloths in anger just as the High Priest rents his cloths. They then command him to prophesise so that they might know their fate:

*And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy. (Mark 14)*

This little phrase in Mark caused the author of Mathew unease. When he writes his gospel he tries to explain it away with the absurdity that they were asking Jesus to prophesise who it was who had just hit him! But this is not the meaning of prophecy, the art of predicting the great things that are yet to be.

The most telling detail of all is how the Roman soldiers are supposed to have bowed down to worship Jesus as King. This recalls the fact that the demons are forced to worship the Son of the Most High God as their King even as they crucify him. They do so with mockery and violence.

*And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him. (Mark 15)*

The crown of flowers is replaced by a crown of thorns and the cloak of light is taken away from him to be replaced by a cloak of purple – signifying both kingship and a descent to the material world. The demons then bow down to him as King.

In the gospel stories of the trial of Christ he is brought by the Jewish priests to Pontius Pilate. The real Pontius Pilate had nothing to do with the crucifixion and would have been amazed had he known that he would be infamous forever for having ordered a crucifixion that existed only in the mystic experiences of a young Jewish woman whom he had never met. But that does not mean that the role that was later assigned to Pontius Pilate was not in the original story. The Jews and the Roman soldiers were originally demons but who then was Pilate? Most likely he is Yahweh himself. The demons do not have authority to crucify the Christ without appealing to Yahweh. Pilate as provincial governor exercised an authority that was both absolute and yet also temporary as it was delegated by a higher authority and could be withdrawn. So also did Yahweh exercise complete authority over mankind but that authority too was delegated from the highest god on a temporary basis. Paul calls Yahweh the mediator. Just as the Jews came under Pilate's authority even though he would have despised them so also the demonic beings were under Yahweh. When the demons come to him asking that they should have authority to crucify Christ, Yahweh tries everything to dissuade them. He does not want the Christ, whom he believes to be his son, to suffer crucifixion. Instead he offers up Barabbas, one who is guilty of insurrection and whom as part of that insurrection has committed murder. The insurrection is not against the rule of Rome - no Roman governor would ever have contemplated releasing such an insurrectionist. The insurrection is against law of Yahweh and is the disobedience that brings death into the world, the disobedience whose archetypal form was the disobedience of Adam. Barabbas stands for man himself. Yahweh is offering the demons man, the guilty party, to punish instead of the Christ. The demons reject this offer because they wish to destroy the heir.

“Crucify him!” they demand. Yahweh has to grant their demand and surrender to them the Christ. He does so exceedingly unwillingly but his own law traps him. Why do the demons have such power over the Christ?

The answer is contained in the theme of betrayal that runs through the passion story. Jesus is betrayed into the hands of his enemies by his disciple Judas. He is denied three times by Peter. His disciples cannot even stay awake on watch while he communes imploringly with the high father. This makes it clear who betrays Jesus – it is his own followers, it is man and woman. Man has betrayed Jesus into the hands of the demons

through sin. The demons have no power over the innocent but Jesus has taken on himself the guilt of others and has been betrayed by the sin of those others.

The demons drag the Christ away from this audience with Yahweh hitting him and spitting in his eyes. They take him to the place of execution outside the Gates of Hades. There they hang him on a stake from midday until sunset when he dies. At that time the victory of the dark forces is complete. The extent of that victory is summed up in the Christ's despairing cry, "My god, my god, why have you forsaken me!". He is utterly forsaken and abandoned by the light. The demons dance in jubilation at his defeat. They take his body down from the stake and drag it across the ground to a pit-like tomb that has been hewn out of solid rock. Down into this pit they cast his body and shout in joy as it falls. A great stone is pushed across the pit mouth to seal him in for eternity. In the cold darkness of the tomb his body lies stiff and lifeless.

The Son of the Most High God has been defeated. He will be condemned to the underworld forever by the immutable law of Yahweh under which none who die can return to the land of the living. The demonic forces shall continue to rule in the world of men and shall be more powerful than ever now that the heir has been killed.

The defeat and death of the Son of God is a cataclysmic event that shakes the heavens. Yet in the world it is witnessed only by that person to whom it has been ordained that it shall be revealed. The Gospels of Belief make it quite clear who this witness was. Not a king, or a great warrior, or a high priest. Not even a man but a woman - Mary the Magdalene.

By means of contemplative states of mind she had been able to penetrate to the mystic level of reality where the event takes place. She sees the man of light and recognises him as the Christ. On her knees she, a woman of sin (not in the sense of a prostitute but in the sense that all men and women are sinful) anoints his feet with her hair. She is there at the terrible crucifixion, weeping and sharing his suffering at the foot of the stake. She follows the demons to the tomb and when they are gone she enters to anoint him in death and share the darkness. Her love is sufficient to enable her to penetrate the stone that seals the tomb, yet as she passes it rolls back to seal both of them together in an embrace of death.

While the Christ's body lies in the tomb his spirit has passed through the Gates of Hades into the world of the dead. The demons of that place are fouler even than those who guard the gates. Yet they have no power over him, cannot see him or apprehend him, and he passes among them unperceived. He travels to the place of the soul, the dwelling that is both house and tomb. Inside lies a boy, in death like slumber or slumber like death. The Christ puts forward his hands and commands him to arise.

At this moment the corpse of Christ and the grieving Mary are joined by a mysterious dark third. This third brings with them the things of death. This is the moment of utter darkness and terror. The three are utterly forsaken and without god, lying in the tomb which is both the pit of death and the pit of sin.



Yet the demons have been tricked. The sacrifice that Christ made out of pure love has created a more powerful force than the demons can comprehend, more powerful even than the dictates of Yahweh. The light of Christ's self-sacrifice short circuits to the light of the highest father and creates a great rift in the fabric of reality. The stone is rolled aside and the Gates of Hades are cast down. The Law of Yahweh is overturned.

Mary perceives this as a sudden influx of light, by the disappearance of Christ and by the transformation of the dark third into a magnificent youth glowing with light and dressed as a bridegroom. His name comes to her also – he is to be called Jesus.

The event is even more miraculous than Mary originally perceives for she comes to understand that Jesus is the Christ. He has come down to take human form to establish his kingdom on earth.

The role of demonic forces in crucifying Christ is mentioned in the epistles of the apostle Paul -

*Yet we speak of wisdom among the initiated (the perfect), a wisdom not of this age, nor of the Rulers (Archons) of this age who are becoming useless, but we speak the hidden wisdom of God in a secret, that God foreordained before the ages to our glory, which none of the Rulers of this age knew, for if they had known, they would have not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Corinthians 2)*

The phrase Paul uses "Rulers of this age" or Archons is a technical Gnostic term that refers to the demonic powers that rule over the world. Paul is here saying that these demons were tricked into crucifying Christ.

In Romans Paul talks about death entering the world through one man, Adam, and being banished by one man Jesus Christ. In Corinthians Paul makes clear that these first and second men are different in nature:

*The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life giving spirit. The spiritual was not first but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. (1 Corinthians 15)*

That is although Jesus Christ was a man he was a spiritual man and not like Adam a material, or earthly man. The coming of Jesus as a man in this spiritual form is a concept that can only be understood in the terms of the philosophy of the early Christians that underlies the epistles of Paul. The evidence from the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Phillip, the teachings attributable to Simon Magus, and the teachings of the Gnostic Valentinus was that men and women were conceived as being twofold or hermaphrodite in nature. One half of the person was the earthly man or woman, the other half, of the opposite sex, was the soul or spirit. At the original creation man was a perfect union of male and female, the material and spiritual. But when Eve was separated from Adam

death entered the world. In terms of this philosophy a spiritual man, such as Paul describes Jesus, is one half of a person whose earthly nature was female.

Mary was the only one to witness the event of the crucifixion as it happened in the time of this world. But as an event that is essentially spiritual in nature it is accessible from any time or place. The initiate into the inner mysteries can experience it at any time with the same reality as Mary did. A female initiate must follow the example of Mary and place herself as Mary at the foot of the cross and in the tomb. This is one reason why Mary is joined in the gospels by other women at these key times. The story recalls not just Mary's experience but the experience of all female pneumatic, or spiritual, Christians.

For a man things are different. A male initiate must place themselves in the role of Jesus. They must experience the event even as Jesus would – the person crucified is both Jesus and themselves, the person who dies is both Jesus and themselves.

It is the male perspective that is important with Paul and in his epistles he is explicit about the need to be crucified with Christ. In Romans he talks about a 'baptism to the death' which involves dieing with Christ so that a person can be reborn:

*Are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized to Christ Jesus, were baptised to his death? (Romans 6)*

This baptism to death involves dieing along with Jesus:

*We were buried together, then, with him through the baptism to the death, that even as Christ was raised up out of the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in the newness of life. For, if we have become planted together in the likeness of his death, so also shall we rise. Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin may be made useless, that we should not longer serve the sin; for he who has died has been set free from sin. (Romans 6)*

The person of the spirit, the pneumatic, is set free from sin because the old person, subject to the rule of sin, dies with Jesus. The person who dies with Christ becomes living:

*And if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ, having been raised up out of the dead, does no more die, death over him has no more lordship; for in that he died, to the sin he died once, and in that he lives he lives to God; so also you, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to the sin, and living to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6)*

The gospels of belief have indications of this practise of being crucified with Jesus. It is recorded that Simon from Cyrene carried the cross for Jesus. This is derived from the fact that the pneumatic underwent the crucifixion with Jesus. The carrying of the cross is indicated in another saying from the Gospel of Thomas:

*Jesus said: He who shall not hate his father and his mother cannot be my disciple, and (he who does not) hate his brethren and his sisters and take up his cross like me shall not be worthy of me.*

The use of the word 'hate' is one indication that the Gospel of the Twin was originally written in Aramaic since the equivalent word in Aramaic meant also 'put aside'. The saying does not tell the disciple to literally hate his father, mother, brother and sisters but to put aside these family ties in order to follow Christ.

The practise is also indicated in the distorted story of Barabbas. For the name Barabbas is another form of the name Jesus. The male disciple is crucified as the 'twin' of Jesus – in the mystic world the rules of identity twist and shift and a person can be both Jesus and himself, both two and one. The disciple is put on trial with Jesus, the disciple is the guilty one, yet it is Jesus who bears the burden of death.

The final indication in the passion story of the disciple sharing the fate of Jesus is the crucifixion of the two thieves alongside Jesus. This is a muddled interpretation of the story that others were crucified 'with' Jesus which was interpreted in the gospels of belief as them being crucified alongside Jesus rather than in the guise of Jesus. The two thieves are guilty whereas Jesus is innocent – one gains the redemption with Jesus and the other does not reflecting the two outcomes of the resurrection event.

But why are there two thieves and not one? The reason is that the crucifixion is experienced by the three present at the tomb, the three forsaken by god. These three are Jesus, the disciple and the dark third. The third is mysterious and yet without the third nothing shall be accomplished, nothing shall be raised. The writers of the gospels of belief understood none of this. So the three were interpreted as three men who were literally crucified. In the Gospel of Thomas there is a recollection of the three in a highly obtuse passage. The Coptic version appears to have been corrupted with translation and copying. The manuscript of the oldest, Greek, version is damaged and difficult to read yet it appears to say the following:

*Where there are three, they are without God, and where there is only one, I say, I am with that one.*

The three who lie in the tomb are the three who are without god – literally god forsaken. What happens after the resurrection is that the dark third and Jesus are gone leaving the spirit and the disciple – as with the story of Mary, the angel and the empty tomb. The two, the spirit and the disciple, are really one through the mystic union of the bridal chamber. And Jesus is with that one. The same saying continues:

*Lift up the stone, and you will find me there. Split the piece of wood, and I am there.*

Why does this follow the original saying about the three and one? In the later Coptic version of Thomas it is in another place. They belong together because they both relate

to the tomb. The saying is usually interpreted as being pantheistic – Jesus is present everywhere even underneath stones and in wood. Yet the saying specifically refers to actions – lifting and splitting – which has led others to the idea that it is manual work in general that is being referred to. But there is another deeper meaning than either of these two, one that shows the connection between Jesus and Osiris.

When Isis finds the body of Osiris it has been absorbed into a great tree which has grown out of the tamarisk bush. Isis splits the wood of this tree to find the body of Osiris. When Mary the Magdalene seeks the body of Jesus the stone sealing the entrance is found rolled away. Originally the tomb was a pit and the stone had to be lifted so that Jesus could be resurrected. The two events are exact correspondences in the two stories. And it is precisely the moving of the stone and the splitting of the wood that are brought together in a saying about the search for Jesus.

The search for the body of Jesus is identical with another search – that for the dark third. For just as, in the mystic reality, the lines of separation between the disciple and Jesus become blurred so also does the dead Jesus stand for the dark third itself. This is the search mentioned in the saying at the beginning of in the Gospel of Thomas:

*Jesus said: He who seeks, let him not cease seeking until he finds; and when he finds he will be troubled, and if he is troubled, he will be amazed, and he will reign over the All.*

There are two other sayings in the Gospel of Thomas that are almost identical to each other which refer to this search.

*Jesus said: He who has known the world has found a corpse, and he who has found a corpse, the world is not worthy of him.*

*Jesus said: He who has known the world has found the body, and he who has found the body, the world is not worthy of him.*

The body or corpse in these sayings is linked to the body of Osiris. When Set tears it into pieces and distributes those pieces through the world Isis has to search through the world to find it. By finding the body of Jesus the disciple is able to experience the resurrection and so rises above the world. A slightly distorted form of the same is recalled in another saying in Thomas:

*Jesus said: He who has found the world and become rich, let him deny the world.*

Riches in the Gospel of Thomas are code for the Kingdom of Heaven (as they are in Wisdom literature). So it is saying that those who have found the world (really the body of Jesus which is in the world) and entered the Kingdom of Heaven should renounce the world.

The deeper understanding in all these sayings is that the tomb in which Jesus/Osiris lies is identical to the world. The body of Jesus/Osiris is in all things yet it is his dead body, the

body forsaken by god. Before the disciple can experience the resurrection they, like Isis and Mary, have to find this dead body. But the body of Jesus stands for a person's soul just as the living Jesus stands for the spirit. So the search for the body of Jesus is the same as the search for the dark third, the soul, the image reflected in the dark pool of death within.

Although the dead body of Jesus is an image of the soul in general it is particularly apt in the case of women. The use of Jesus to represent the soul and the connections to Isis's search for Osiris are indications that the Gospel of the Twin, now preserved in corrupted form as the Gospel of Thomas, was written by a woman, Mary the Magdalene.

The initiates, male or female, who were able to experience the resurrection to become pneumatics were the rare people who were 'chosen' rather than 'called'. The Gospel of Thomas describes them as 'one in a thousand and two in ten thousand' - meaning they were very few in number. The pneumatic knew that the resurrection was something that happened in life and not after death. By the resurrection a person's dead soul would be reborn as a living spirit and the person would enter the kingdom of the heaven. But to experience the resurrection a person must be able to place themselves in the mystic reality where it takes place.

By contrast the 'psychics' or those of the soul would not experience the resurrection. But they would hear and respond to passion as a story. Their soul would recognise its truth and they would enter into the Christianity of belief symbolised by baptism. The psychic would understand the resurrection of the soul as something that would happen to them after death if they kept faith in Jesus and acted on that faith by doing good works. It was for the psychic that the story eventually became literalised, as it was the literal form that was the easiest to believe in.

The Jews believed that the Gates of Hades were in three places – in the wilderness, under the sea, and in Jerusalem. When the story was literalised it was transferred into two of these locations. The temptation of Christ takes place in the wilderness. Originally this was part of the passion story but it became separated as the authors of the gospels of belief struggled to write a coherent narrative out of stories based upon mystic experiences. One sign of the connection is that both Jesus' sojourn in the wilderness and his stay on earth after the resurrection both take forty days. The crucifixion itself was sited in Jerusalem and the Gates of Hades became the gates of Jerusalem itself. So in the gospels of belief the crucifixion takes place outside the gates of Jerusalem in the place of the Skull and not outside the Gates of Hades.

## **Mary and Peter**

As Jesus grew within Mary she commenced her ministry. It was Jesus who spoke through her.

She began to spread the word to the people. They laughed at her. “Is this the woman Mary who is preaching to us?” Others were angry and would drive her out, beat her or try to have her stoned. “How dare you, a woman, talk to us about God!”

But a few, a very few listened. These were the worse type of people, the prostitutes, the beggars, the sinners and idlers. They did not believe her but they listened. Some of these were to become the disciples. As it says in the ‘long ending’ of Mark:

*Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. (Mark 16)*

In John puts it more succinctly:

*Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had spoken these things to her. (John 20)*

This point in the gospel story, where Mary gives the disciples the news that Jesus has risen, is in fact the same as the coming of Jesus to the disciples. The end of the gospels is the beginning. When the angel in the tomb talks to Mary and the other women in the Gospel of Mark he tells them that Jesus will appear to his disciples in Galilee. But there is another place in the gospels where Jesus appears to his disciples in Galilee – at the beginning of his ministry.

The disciples disbelieve Mary until they see him for themselves. It was not enough for Mary to talk to them about Jesus. He had to appear to them and become manifest. So she showed Jesus to them. She took them down into death with Jesus, down in the darkness of the tomb. They were given the gift of the resurrection and they saw.

Yet there was something different about their experiences. The women saw Jesus just like Mary. The men saw him too but more dimly. But they were given something else, something so beautiful, so true that it changed their lives just as Jesus had changed Mary’s. They were given the spirit in the form of a girl bride robed in white. For the realities of men and women are different and opposed: the reality of woman is man, and the reality of man is woman.

And Jesus instructed the disciples through Mary. He told them to go out and preach in his name and do miracles and prophesise so that the people might be amazed. And the

disciples did these things, always acting in the name of Jesus. Thus did the ministry of Jesus commence.

It came to Mary that she should take a male pseudonym so that the disciples would refer to her by this name. And no one should know that it was her Mary who was the leader, except those who had seen Jesus. For only in this way could the movement spread without the difficulties and ridicule that would attach to a female leader. Now Magdalene means in Aramaic 'The tower'. It symbolises strength and solidity. So Jesus gave her a male name which carried the same qualities. She would be known also by the name "The Rock" – in Aramaic this is Cephas and in Greek Peter. As Jesus told her:

*And I say to you, that you are a rock, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. (Mathew 16)*

So Mary had three identities: she was known as the Tower, the Rock and her spirit was Jesus, which means Saviour. All three names are linked in a passage in 2 Samuel where they are used as expressions to describe god -

*The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; (2 Samuel 22)*

The portrait of Peter that has merged over time is that of Simon Peter, a bearded middle-aged disciple who is impetuous, boastful and sometimes foolish but basically a loyal and warm-hearted follower of Jesus. Yet a close examination of the earliest sources reveals a very different picture.

The earliest evidence is from the epistles of Paul who confusingly appears to use both the names Cephas and Peter but who never calls either of them Simon. In the epistles of Paul Cephas emerges as a shadowy enigmatic leader of the Jesus movement who has come on the scene long before Paul.

Turning to the gospels of belief, the earliest source Mark does say that Peter and Simon are the same but he never uses the term Simon Peter. A close examination of Mark's uses of the names suggests that they were originally separate and that it is the author of Mark himself who has made the connection.

At the beginning of Mark the name Simon is used exclusively. Mark tells us that Simon has a brother called Andrew, that Simon and Andrew are both fishermen and that the two are the first disciples called by Jesus. Simon also has a mother in law who is taken ill and who is cured by Jesus. This all appears to be factual and straightforward information.

But in the gospels of belief things are never what they seem. First the role of fisherman is highly symbolic. As Jesus says to them 'Follow me and I shall make you fishers of men'. What do the fish stand for? Fish live under the waters and the waters stand for the underworld that is frequently depicted as being situated under the water as well as, or instead of, being under the ground. So the fish are denizens of the underworld; they are

symbols of the soul. The operation of fishing is symbolic of the raising of the soul out of the underworld and into the air – that is into its spirit form. In this sense it parallels baptism. A fisherman is one who can help others to the pneumatic resurrection. According to Mark immediately after his encounter with Simon and Andrew, Jesus converts another two disciples James and John who also, by some strange coincidence, happen to be both brothers and fishermen. These four disciples form the hard core of the twelve in Mark - indeed they are the only ones, apart from Levi and Judas Iscariot, that the author of Mark appears to know anything about other than their names. It is unlikely that any of them were fishermen in a literal sense and they probably were not biological brothers either. The depiction as brothers is probably a confusion generated by the early Christian practise of referring to other Christians as brothers and sisters. James is described as ‘James of Zebedee’ and John as his brother. Most likely this has given rise to the misunderstanding that both James and John were sons of Zebedee.

The curing of Simon’s mother in law should not be taken literally either. This is the description in Mark -

*The mother-in-law of Simon was lying in a fever, and immediately they tell him about her, and having come near, he raised her up, having laid hold of her hand, and the fever left her immediately, and she then ministered to them. (Mark 1)*

Elements of this story suggest the spiritual resurrection. The three are present - Jesus, Simon and Simon’s mother in law as the dark third. The dark third is under the shadow of death – in this case represented by a fever. Jesus goes to the dark third who is lying down and holding her hand raises her up. As for the expression mother in law that can be understood in terms of the fact that a man’s female spirit is referred to as his wife, sister, mother or daughter. If Mark had come across a reference to the ‘mother and wife’ of Simon being raised up by Jesus and then serving Jesus then he would have naturally assumed that ‘mother and wife’ must be a mistake for ‘mother of the wife’. Simon’s ‘mother in law’ is his female soul/spirit that is raised by Jesus.

In his list of the disciples Mark refers to James and John in the following terms:

*...James of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, and he gave them the name Boanerges, that is, ‘Sons of thunder;’ (Mark 3)*

What does the strange designation ‘Sons of Thunder’ mean? The title of the enigmatic Gnostic work Thunder: Perfect Mind suggests a meaning. The subject of this poem is Achamoth who is presented in the guise of both Wisdom and Isis. The title ‘Thunder’ a feminine noun in Greek, is apparently a name assigned to Achamoth. Moreover thunder as a phenomenon is regarded like Achamoth as being an emanation from god and a way in which god makes his will known on Earth. The term ‘Sons of Thunder’ may be a confused representation of the fact that both James and John were sons of feminine Thunder or Achamoth. They are pneumatics who, like Simon, experience a female spirit.



After using the name Simon in the first section of the gospel, the author of Mark switches to using Peter almost exclusively. Peter appears at key times in the narrative. It is Peter who is the first one to recognise Jesus as the Christ but then shortly afterwards he is severely rebuked by Jesus. It is Peter, along with James and John, who witnesses the transfiguration of Jesus on the mount. Climbing the mount is symbolic of the ascent in the spiritual region. Jesus appears to them in spiritual form along with Elijah and Moses. It is Peter, again with James and John, who keeps watch with Jesus on the night before the crucifixion. It is Peter who penetrates close to the trial of Jesus but then denies Jesus three times. All of these indicate the special role that Peter plays.

Simon and Peter are linked on only two occasions. In Mark's list of the disciples the first entry is:

*Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter) (Mark 3)*

The second time that Peter and Simon are mentioned as one person is when Jesus goes apart in the garden of Gethsemane. He comes back to find Peter/Simon asleep:

*Coming back he finds them sleeping, and says to Peter, 'Simon, you sleep! You were not able to watch one hour!' (Mark 14)*

Sleep is a term used for the state of the soul before the pneumatic awakening of the resurrection. Jesus awakens the soul of the disciple into the spirit. The words spoken by Jesus, 'Simon you sleep', is the clue that this was taken from a story about the resurrection experience of a person called Simon who was not necessarily the same as the disciple Simon. Later in the passion narrative there is another Simon, Simon the Cyrenian, who carries the cross for Jesus. Most likely these two fragments are both borrowings by the gospel of Mark from the resurrection experience of this Simon the Cyrenian. The reference to Peter is made for the purpose of narrative, to blend the story of the Simon who is asleep into the main story by making the connection that this Simon is the same as the disciple Simon and hence the same as Peter.

The gospel of Mark reveals the true status of Peter in the words of the angel who appears to Mary and the other women in the empty tomb says to them about Jesus - '*Go! Say to his disciples, and Peter, that he does go before you to Galilee*'. Peter is mentioned as being separate to the disciples. The same formula occurs in Paul's account of the resurrection appearances - '*that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve*'. These make it quite clear that Peter is not a disciple at all. He has a special status over and above the disciples – he is the founder of Christianity. But to Mark, writing a literal gospel, he cannot be the founder as this role is taken by Jesus himself. Therefore Mark must squeeze him in among the Twelve.

What has happened can be reconstructed. The author of Mark has available to him a few stories and scant scraps of information about four disciples - Simon, John, James and Andrew. He has a greater number of prominent traditions about Cephas or Peter, most of them in fact grossly distorted by verbal transmission over a number of years. He also has

a list of the twelve that embarrassingly does not include Peter. He incorporates all this material into his narrative by first setting out the stories about the four disciples. He then includes his list of the disciples and brings in Peter by giving us the information that Peter was another name for Simon. He then sets out his stories about Peter adding in the names of John, James and Andrew at various points to give the impression that Peter was one among many. With this arrangement the author of Mark has bridged the chasm between Peter and the disciples with the minimum of alteration to his raw materials.

It is unlikely that the author of Mark completely made up the identification of Peter and Simon. He attempts to be truthful to his materials, although he has little understanding of those materials, and inevitably warps them in trying to incorporate them into a literal framework. There may have been an early confusion between the mysterious Cephas and the prominent disciple Simon. Or perhaps it resulted from confusion between Cephas and Simon Magus, who may have been the same as the disciple Simon. Another possibility is that the later apostle Peter who became hopelessly confused with Cephas may have changed his name from Simon. Peter as a name was almost unknown before its appearance in Christianity and the apostle Peter has clearly taken his name from the founder.

Once Mark had made the mistaken connection between Simon and Peter the other gospel writers took up its use and Peter becomes Simon Peter. Even the Gospel of Thomas is affected as references to Peter are changed to Simon Peter.

In Mathew the section where Peter tells Jesus he is the Christ continues with the assignment of extraordinary powers to Peter:

*He said to them, 'And you, who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered saying 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answering, said to him, 'Happy are you, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood did not reveal to you, but my Father who is in the heavens. And I say to you, that you are a rock, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it; and I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you may bind upon the earth shall be bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose upon the earth shall be loosed in the heavens.'* (Mathew 16)

The designation of Simon, Bar-Jona, means son of the dove, the symbol of the spirit, and is a reference to the fact that Simon is a pneumatic. In Mark it is Peter who makes the 'confession of faith' so why does Jesus reply to him as Simon in Mathew? The reason is that this is the point chosen by the author of Mathew for Jesus to name Simon as Peter. Mark only tells us that Jesus has named Simon as Peter whereas Mathew, in a further development of the Simon Peter story, has invented the circumstances in which this naming occurs.

The powers assigned to Peter are remarkable and completely contradict the role of Peter as one disciple among twelve. They show Peter as the founder being granted special powers by the spirit Jesus. The granting of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven signifies

that Peter has the power to induce the pneumatic resurrection in others. Without this power the Jesus movement would have gone nowhere. Paul's list of the witnesses to the resurrection is most likely the list of those receiving the resurrection directly from Mary/Peter. Through the pneumatic resurrection the gates of Hades are defeated as the soul is reborn out of Hades as a spirit.

The reference to binding and loosening means determining what is forbidden and what is permitted. To the Jewish rabbis binding was the act of forbidding a thing or behaviour, and loosening was the act of permitting a thing or behaviour. Jesus is here giving Peter complete power to make the rules. But the author of Mathew has completely misunderstood this power. He thinks that Jesus is giving Peter the power to make rules for others. In fact Peter and all pneumatics are being given the power to make the rules for themselves based on their own spiritual revelation.

Why does Mathew choose this particular point for the naming of Simon? To the author of Mathew the name Peter is a name of honour conveyed on Simon, which is given along with his powers as the rewarded for correctly perceiving that Jesus is the Christ. Mathew is a brilliant propagandist and here uses a passage in Mark both to bring out a meaning not in Mark and to overwrite a very embarrassing reference to Peter. In response to Jesus' question 'Who do men say I am?' the disciples in Mark answer -

*'Some John the Baptist, others Elijah, but others one of the prophets.' And he said to them, 'And you - who do you say I am?' and Peter answering said to him, 'You are the Christ.' And he strictly charged them that they should tell no one about it, and began to teach them, that it behoves the Son of Man to suffer many things, and to be rejected by the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and to be killed, and after three days to rise again; and he was openly speaking the word. And Peter having taken him aside, began to rebuke him, and he, having turned, and having looked on his disciples, rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind me, Satan, because you do not mind the things of God, but the things of men.'* (Mark 8)

In this Mark passage Peter is not rewarded for saying that Jesus is the Christ. Indeed he is very quickly rebuked. The form of the story has been taken from a saying from the gospel of the Twin where Jesus asks the disciples who he is like. Following the answers he takes one disciple, Thomas, aside and imparts to him special knowledge that consists of three words or three things. The knowledge is apparently blasphemous and would get Thomas stoned if he repeats it. Now Thomas means 'twin' and it is the twin of Jesus to whom Jesus imparts this blasphemous knowledge. The twin of Jesus is Mary so the original saying records that some of the spiritual revelations passed from Jesus to Mary are blasphemous in nature. In the version in Mark's gospel this special knowledge is taken, wrongly, as being about Jesus' coming passion. But there is also a hint that Jesus is telling them about his role as the Son of God.

In Mark's version the elements about Peter have been overlaid on the original saying. These elements are first that Peter recognises that Jesus is the Christ and second that Jesus says to Peter 'Get behind me Satan ...'. The meaning of these can be understood

by the telling phrase in Mark that Jesus 'did appear first to Mary the Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons'. The same information that is given about Mary is being repeated in a different form and being assigned to Mary's other identity Peter. First we are told that it is Peter who first recognises Jesus as the Christ – this parallels the fact that Jesus appears first to Mary. Second that Jesus then exorcises devils from Peter for this is the meaning of the phrase 'Get behind me Satan ...'. It is not a rebuke, as the author of Mark thinks, but an exorcism. The seven demons do not just dwell in Mary/Peter but are present in all men and women, corrupting them and giving them the mind of man. With the coming of the spirit the devils are cast out by its power and the person assumes the mind of god.

The identity between Peter and Mary is indicated by much more than the similarity of the names. In Paul's list of those who had experienced the pneumatic resurrection the first appearance was to Cephas followed by the twelve. Mary the Magdalene is not mentioned. The gospels of belief have Jesus appearing first to Mary. There must have been a very strong tradition behind this story otherwise the gospels would not have assigned this role to a woman who were regarded in Jewish society as being ineligible as witnesses. The two accounts can only be reconciled if Cephas is a codename for Mary or vice versa. It is very easy to see why a woman should adopt a male identity as a codename, very difficult to see why a man would adopt a female identity!

The identity of Peter and Mary is also indicated by the inter-linked roles they play as witnesses to the passion story. It is Peter who along with others is with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. It is Peter alone who penetrates to Jesus' trial where, according to Mark, he denies Jesus three times. It is Mary (both as the Magdalene and in other identities) who is the witness of the crucifixion. It is Mary who goes to the tomb and witnesses the empty tomb and the angel. In Mark the angel then tells her that Jesus will appear to Peter but it is to Mary that Jesus actually makes his first appearance. These are indications that Mary and Peter are one and the same - together they have witnessed the whole crucifixion and resurrection.

The gospels show great confusion between Peter and Mary at key points of the resurrection account. For they are attempting to combine two contradictory traditions – that it was Mary and that it was Peter who first witnessed the resurrection. For example in Luke it is written -

*It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which had happened. (Luke 24)*

Luke attempts to reconcile the two traditions by saying that although Peter did not actually witness the resurrection first he saw the empty tomb and the grave cloths and marvelled.

In John the confusion is not just between Mary and Peter but also with the disciple 'whom Jesus loved'. This mysterious disciple has been cynically co-opted by the author of John who presents his gospel as having been written by this disciple. This is a brilliant move because John, the last of the gospels, was written a very long time after Jesus' life and so has a problem of establishing its credibility. By pretending to be written by a disciple who can be assumed to have privileged knowledge from Jesus the Gospel of John sets out its credentials of being the one true gospel that draws on this secret knowledge. John is always very careful to keep the identity of this disciple a mystery. It is very hard for anyone to attack the pretended authorship if no one knows whom the author is supposed to be!

In truth the disciple who Jesus loved is Mary the Magdalene herself in her role as the bride of Christ. John has got even the sex of the disciple wrong. This is not surprising as it would be very damaging for author of a literal gospel to write that the disciple whom Jesus loved was a woman. In his account of the resurrection John grapples with presenting three traditions in the same story – that it was Mary, or perhaps Peter, or perhaps the disciple Jesus loved who first witnessed the resurrection. The result is a highly confused and artificial account of events -

*On the first day of the week came Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, to the tomb, and sees the stone taken away from the tomb. She runs and comes to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and says to them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the tomb. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the tomb. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet he did not go in. Then came Simon Peter following him, and he went into the tomb, and sees the linen clothes where they lie, and the cloth, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but folded up in a place by itself. Then entered also that other disciple, which came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own home. (John 20)*

After this pantomime of Peter and the other disciple racing to and then bobbing in and out of the tomb the story reverts right back to where it started with Mary going back into the tomb alone and receiving the revelation of the angel. The confusion is explained if Mary, Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved are all the same person.

The final connection between Mary and Peter is that in many of the non-canonical works Mary and Peter are continually opposed to each other. This holds the clue to another otherwise mystifying problem – why Peter gets such a negative press. If Peter is the founder then he should be revered above all others in early Christian writings. Yet he is portrayed as something of a buffoon. For this portrayal to have become prevalent it must go back to Mary herself. It seems that she contrasted her alter ego Peter with her Mary identity. She told stories about her two ego-selves with one on each side of the question and Peter always in the wrong. Peter, as Mary's lower masculine identity would also

have been contrasted with Jesus, the perfect man. In this comparison Peter would bear some of Mary's own weaknesses.

It seems from this game that Mary had a sense of humour. She may have been obliged to assume a male identity but that did not mean that she had to like it. She assigned to her Peter identity many of the male chauvinistic attitudes she encountered. Yet these stories had a serious purpose also. She was attempting to change the attitudes of her disciples, both male and female, so that they would accept that in things of the spirit men and women are equal. In this she was only partly successful. The early Christian church was remarkably open to women but very soon traditional attitudes began to reassert themselves.

One of the negative sayings is in the Gospel of Thomas:

*“Simon Peter said to them: Let Mary go out from among us, for women are not worthy of the life.”*

In the “Gospel according to Mary” Mary receives communications directly from a spiritual Jesus after the resurrection. Peter seeks to deny Mary's link to Jesus:

*Peter answered and spoke concerning these same things. He questioned them about the Savior: Did He really speak privately with a woman and not openly to us? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did He prefer her to us?*

*Then Mary wept and said to Peter, My brother Peter, what do you think? Do you think that I have thought this up myself in my heart, or that I am lying about the Savior?*

*Levi answered and said to Peter, Peter you have always been hot tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Savior knows her very well. That is why He loved her more than us. Rather let us be ashamed and put on the perfect Man, and separate as He commanded us and preach the gospel, not laying down any other rule or other law beyond what the Savior said.*

These words recall her Mary identity's answer to her Peter identity. Jesus loves me more for I am his bride.

So Mary's disciples preached the word of Jesus, first just the Twelve, but then in increasing numbers. And under the name of Cephas was Mary known, and many were the ones, both men and woman, whom Mary initiated and gave birth to.

## PART 2: THE SECRET TEACHINGS

*Note: The teachings in this part are largely based upon the extant version of the Gospel of the Twin known as the Gospel of Thomas.*

### **The teaching of Mary**

Now Jesus taught through Mary, and through her lips he spoke. These are the words that Mary spoke to her disciples.

“The kingdom of heaven is not in the sky, the kingdom of heaven is not under the sea, the kingdom of heaven is not under the ground. It is within you and without you. You are of the kingdom. You are the sons and daughters of the living father.”

“You have become one by becoming two. For in you the spirit has become manifest. Let the spirit eat of what is dead within you. Do not allow the animal in your nature to consume the spirit but rather let the spirit consume it. Blessed is he who consumes the lion for the lion becomes man. But wretched is he who is consumed by the lion for the man becomes lion.”

And the disciples asked her, how should we live?

“Do not be concerned with the things of this world. Do not be afraid. Do not ask what will I eat or what will I wear. Trust in the father and mother to give you your bread. As for what you should wear, look at the lilies of the valley. Are they not clothed with the splendour of Achamoth? Do you think the father cares for them less than for you?”

“Yet the days will come when this existence will end, when the worldly heaven around you will pass away, and the spiritual heaven inside will pass away. Do not grieve, for those who are dead have never been alive and those who are living will not die. What is living within you has eaten of what is dead within you to give you life. But when you become only spirit passing into the light what will you do? On that day when you became one, you became two. But when your spirit separates from your body you will again become two and then what will you do?”

“Remember that you are not of this world. You are your spirit and your spirit is you. Do not cling to what is perishable. You are like children living in a field that is not yours. For your body does not belong to you it belongs to the powers of this age. If they would take your body and destroy it, give it to them willingly, strip off your perishable cloths of flesh and take on the cloak of light your father and mother have prepared for you.”

“When the time comes to unclthe yourselves be not ashamed or grievous. Be like a little child who casts off their garments joyously and tramples them beneath their feet. For then you will see the son of the living one and you will not be afraid.”

“Do not cling to the things of this world. If a thief would steal your cloak then give them your tunic also. For cloak and tunic belong to the thieves and powers of this world, not to you. So give back to them what belongs to them.”

“You have nothing of this world. You are passers-by. The foxes, the powers, have their holes. The birds, the thieves, have their nests. But the son of man has nowhere to lay his head.”

“He who does not leave behind his father and his mother, his brother and his sisters does not love the son of man. You must take up your cross in the way of Jesus. Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul. For the living soul, the spirit does not care for the things of the flesh. Woe to the soul that depends upon the flesh. For the souls of those who live by the flesh are dead.”

“Be like the wise man who went fishing. He cast his net down into the sea and drew it up filled with fish. Among them he found a large good fish. He threw all the little fish back into the sea.”

“Be like the shepherd who had a hundred sheep. The largest of these went astray. He left the other ninety nine to go and search for the one who was lost, for this one he loved the most.”

And her disciples asked her “What do these things mean? What is the large fish, what is the large sheep?”

So she explained to them.

“The large good fish is the spirit. The large fish is the kingdom. The little fish are the good things of this world. Throw back the little fish and keep just the big fish.”

“The large sheep is your soul and spirit, that which was lost and is found. The large sheep is the kingdom. The other sheep are your other responsibilities and cares. Like the shepherd you must desert these other responsibilities and cares for the greater responsibility of the kingdom.”

Later many of the things which Jesus spoke through Mary were written down and are preserved in the Gospel Of Thomas. So in Thomas it is written:

*Jesus said: The kingdom is like a shepherd who had hundred sheep. One of them, the biggest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and sought after the one till he found it. When he had laboured, he said to the sheep: I love thee more than the ninety-nine.*

Later one of the foolish pondered this saying. He had been told that the sheep represented the lost soul. But who then, he asked himself, were the other ninety-nine sheep? If the large sheep was a lost soul then the others must be souls who were not lost.



But the fact that the lost sheep was 'large' did not fit this idea so he dropped the word and this is what he wrote.

*What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And having found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say to you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance. (Luke 15)*

Thus came into being the absurdity that one person who strays is worth more than ninety nine people who do not stray. Many were disturbed by this conclusion. How is it possible that a faithless one should be worth not just more than one person who had stayed faithful but more than ninety-nine such faithful people? In an attempt to explain this another story was made up about a man with two sons, one whom was prodigal and the other faithful. And the father loved both sons, the prodigal as much as the faithful. And this story was added in Luke after the parable of the sheep. But it does not explain the unexplainable because the man loves his two sons equally and does not love the prodigal son more than ninety-nine dutiful sons.

But the true meaning is indicated in the writings of Irenaeus who records that the Gnostics believed that the lost sheep represented Achamoth in her fallen state who herself represents the lost soul.

And the disciples questioned Mary further. "How should we fast, how should we pray, how should we give alms?"

She answered them thus:

"Live by the spirit, live by the living truth. Clear your minds, let the spirit fill you. Do not live by the law, do not follow lies, do not do what you abhor. For what is truth to the law is all lies to the spirit. And what is good by the law is abhorrent to the spirit. But all things, both the right and the wrong are revealed to heaven, and nothing shall be hidden from your spirit. Follow your spirit and you will always do what is right."

But her disciples were unhappy with this reply. They were shocked that she told them not to obey the law. They wanted rules, and they asked her again, Please tell us how we should fast, how we should pray, how we should give alms?

And Jesus was angry with the disciples. And through Mary he asked them "Why do you fast, why do you pray, why do you give alms?"

"We fast to be purified from sin, we pray to be saved, we give alms for the sake of our spirits" replied the disciples.

And Jesus replied “If you fast, you will beget a sin for yourselves; and if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do an evil to your spirits.”

And these words of Jesus are those that are preserved in Thomas. And by these words Jesus meant that the disciples should do all things by the spirit and not by the law. He meant that they should have no rules, no preconceptions of what was right and wrong. They should give themselves to the spirit and let the spirit work through them.

And to this Jesus added. “Do not deny the spirit, even if you deny me, even if you deny God himself. For he whom blasphemes against the son of man will be forgiven, and he who blasphemes against God will be forgiven but he who blasphemes against the spirit will never be forgiven”

In saying this Jesus knew that no one could blaspheme God in the spirit. But he wanted to drive home to them that there were no rules upon them, not a single one, not even the rule against blasphemy. The only rule was to be ruled by the spirit.

After this Jesus was silent and the disciples went away muttering and distressed. And some said that Mary was possessed by an evil spirit and that Jesus was a demon.

Now many years later the writer of Mathew had before him the saying about fasting, prayer and alms which was so troublesome. The writers of the other gospels had omitted it.

But the meaning also had been passed down to the writer of Mathew. This was that these things should not be done according to the law but according to the spirit so that god could work through the person. This presented the author of Mathew with a problem. He saw Jesus as coming to fulfil the law and the prophesies not to deny them. As it says in the Gospel of Mathew:

*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For I say to you, until heaven and earth pass, not one letter or one stroke shall pass out from the law, until all be fulfilled. (Mathew 5)*

To resolve this problem Mathew interpreted the saying as meaning that these things should not be done in the way of those who follow the law in form only – the hypocrites. Mathew also had problems as to what was meant what it is said that things should be done in the spirit. He interpreted this as meaning that they should be done in the presence of the spirit, which to Mathew was the spirit of god. This spirit of god sees all things so he tells us to only do the activities in secret where the spirit of god alone will perceive them.

From this saying about fasting, prayer and alms he derived some of the discourse in the Sermon on the Mount. He followed the Gospel of the Twin by taking each of these three items and explaining first in what manner it should not be done. This curious negative form, of explaining how these things can be done in a harmful way, he uses for just the

three items which the Gospel of the Twin says are harmful. This is the sign that Mathew is following the Gospel of the Twin saying. But he shifts the meaning slightly - instead of saying they should not be done in rote obedience to the law, Mathew says they should not be done in the manner of the Hypocrites who appear to follow the law. He then for each item says how it should be done – not in the spirit but in the secret presence of god.

For example he interpreted the saying of how giving alms is harmful based on his own understanding:

*Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when you do your alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. (Mathew 6)*

He then added how giving alms was good if done in the ‘presence of God’:

*But when you do alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does: That your alms may be in secret: and your Father which sees in secret himself shall reward you openly. (Mathew 6)*

The first sentence “let not your left hand know what your right hand does” he took from another saying from the Gospel of the Twin. He appends this saying here because giving alms involves giving with a hand. Giving a physical meaning to this saying is the author’s naïve interpretation. In the version of the Gospel of the Twin that has survived, the Gospel of Thomas, it is placed with a saying about Jesus’ mysteries:

*Jesus said: I tell my mysteries to those who are worthy of my mysteries. What thy right hand shall do, let not thy left hand know what it does.*

The right hand is the spiritual, the left hand the non-spiritual. This can apply to a person, the right hand being their spirit, the left hand their non-spiritual animal mind. The saying is telling a person to follow their spirit almost unconsciously. If the thinking conscious mind intervenes then the message of the spirit will be distorted. It can also be applied within a group of Christians. In this case the right hand are the spiritual Christians called pneumatics and the left hand the non-spiritual baptised Christians called psychics. The innermost mysteries are for the pneumatics only.

In a manner similar to alms he treated the question of fasting. If done in the manner of the hypocrites who appear to follow the law it is harmful:

*Moreover when you fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear to men to fast. Truly I say to you, They have their reward. (Mathew 6)*

Only if done in the secret presence of god is it beneficial:

*But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face; that you appear not unto men to fast, but to your Father which is in secret: and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly. (Mathew 6)*

The same formula is applied to prayer:

*And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. (Mathew 6)*

Instead he said you should pray in the ‘presence of God’:

*But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret shall reward you openly. (Mathew 6)*

With prayer he offers another pair of right and wrongs. To one with the spirit prayer is superfluous because they have inside them that which is a gateway to god. Prayer, for such a one, is a form of blasphemy to the spirit because it denies the spirit. The author of Mathew clearly has access to some teachings that prayer is unnecessary but expresses this in his own, psychic, terms:

*But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not you therefore like them: for your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask him. (Mathew 6)*

After saying the prayer is unnecessary he then gives the prayer that became known as the Lords Prayer. The author of Mathew is struggling with contradictory teachings. Although prayer may be harmful to the pneumatic Christian it is a necessity to the psychic Christian who does not possess the spirit. The prayer that the author of Mathew gives is intended for the psychic Christian.

A version of what is now know as the Lords Prayer appears in the very old document, the Didache, also known as the apostles creed. This gives some simple guidance to early Christians and parts of it are older than the gospels. The Didache describes a world of travelling apostles, prophets and teachers. It was written for a community of psychic, non-spiritual, Christians living in some rural location but contains rules for dealing with the undoubtedly pneumatic ‘prophets’ and ‘apostles’. There have been a number of false prophets and apostles imposing themselves upon the communities. The Didache addresses a very fundamental problem with a movement based upon a spirit that is only perceptible in the interior mental world of the pneumatic – how do you distinguish those with the true spirit from those without the spirit or with a false spirit? The answer the Didache gives is that you observe their behaviour. A true spiritual person asks only for their necessities and either moves on quickly to the next village or supports themselves by their own work. Effectively the Didache gives the early Christians a number of simple rules for distinguishing the good from the impostors. But it also contains early traditions

that hint at the freedom in the spirit whereby a person with a spirit is freed from the constraints of the Law and should not be judged by others. For example one sentence seems to echo the saying in the Gospel of the Twin that the only blasphemy is blasphemy against the spirit:

*And every prophet who speaks in the Spirit you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.*

Another refers to not judging the behaviour of a 'spiritual' Christian:

*And every prophet, proved true, working unto the mystery of the Church in the world, yet not teaching others to do what he himself does, shall not be judged among you, for with God he has his judgment; for so did also the ancient prophets.*

The same freedom from the judgement of man is central to Paul's conception of the pneumatic Christian. In Galatians Paul talks about two covenants. He uses as an allegory the story of the two sons of Abraham, one born of the free woman and the other of the slave girl. The slave girl represents the worldly Jerusalem and her children are slaves of the Law. These are the psychics who must follow the law. The freewoman represents a spiritual Jerusalem. Those who are children of the spirit are free of the law. Paul quotes from Isaiah:

*For it hath been written, 'Rejoice, Oh barren one, who has no children; break forth and cry, thou who art not in labour, because many are the children of the desolate -- more than of her who has a husband.' (Galatians 4)*

To the Gnostics Achamoth or Wisdom, is also called the barren one whose children are many. So the children of the spirit are the children of Achamoth. But the children of the flesh, that is the worldly Jerusalem, do not understand the freedom of the children of Achamoth and so persecute them:

*But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. (Galatians 4)*

In Galatians Paul continues with the argument that one who walks in the spirit is free from the law:

*Walk in the spirit and not in the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit that which is contrary to the flesh. They are opposed one to another, so that you do not do the things that you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. (Galatians 5)*

In 1 Corinthians Paul is even more explicit:

*All things to me are lawful, but not all are profitable; all things to me are lawful, but not all build up; (1 Corinthians 10)*

The pneumatic is free from the law but that does not mean they should do what they wish. They should do instead what the spirit guides them to do. Paul sums up his philosophy of freedom under the spirit by contrasting the spiritual and non-spiritual man:

*The natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of god, for to him they are foolishness, and he is not able to know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things and is judged by no one. (1 Corinthians 2)*

## **Finding the kingdom**

And they asked Jesus, "How can we find the Kingdom?" And through the lips of Mary, Jesus answered thus:

"He who would find the kingdom must seek. Let him seek until he finds that which he seeks. Then he will be troubled. Then after being troubled he will be astonished. Then he will reign over all and will find repose."

And they asked Mary what does this mean?

And Mary answered thus: "You must seek for that which is lost. You must seek for it within yourself. And when you find it you will not be happy but distressed."

And they asked, "What is it that we must find?"

"You must seek the pearl which has become lost. It lies within you. You must seek your own image. Oh you like to look upon your likeness in a looking glass or a picture. Yet when you look upon your image which existed before you, that image which never dies yet remains hidden how much you will grieve!"

And many muttered and said "This is nonsense!" and walked away laughing as Mary's foolishness. But others stayed and asked "Why should we seek that which will distress us?"

And Mary said, "Because only if you find it can you be reborn. Then you will be astonished! Then what joy you will know! Then you will come unto the kingdom! Then you will find repose with the father and enter into the life eternal."

They would have asked her more but after this she was silent.

## **Sowing and harvesting**

And Mary spoke to the disciples thus:

“You have become rich and now you must increase your wealth further. You must lend money at interest. You must seek profitable investments.”

And the disciples said, “What do you mean we are rich! We are poor. You told us to give away our possessions!”

And Mary said, “Those who are poor are those without the kingdom. They live in poverty and they are poverty! It is the kingdom, the spirit, the pearl that is real wealth. He who has become rich will rule and he who has power will renounce power. There was once a merchant. He had a load of goods to trade in a distant land. Yet he found on his way a pearl. He sold all his goods and bought the pearl.”

And she told them a story. “There was a man who owned a field. In that field there was buried a treasure. Yet he did not know that the treasure was there and he did not find it and he died. And his son also did not find the treasure and he sold the field to another. And that person who bought the field ploughed and found the treasure. And he became rich and lent money at interest.”

And they asked her about this story. “Tell us what it means. Yesterday you told us not to lend money at interest but to give it away. Now you are telling us to become usurers!”

“The treasure is that what must be sought for. It shall not be found by those who would be acknowledged as the guardians of the treasure, those who see themselves as the owners. It will not be found by the priests or the scribes, by the Pharisees or the spiritual authorities. It will not be found by many of the Jews to whom it belongs. Instead it is the outsider, the poor, the possessed, the sinner, the gentile who will find it.”

“You find it by ploughing. You must dig up the ground and prepare it for the seed. Once you have found the treasure you will then be in a position to lend at interest. You will help others to the kingdom and in this way you will become richer yourself.”

And she told them another story. This is it as it appears in the Gospel of Thomas. “There was a rich man who had many possessions. He said: I will use my possessions that I may sow and reap and plant, and fill my barns with fruit, that I may have need of nothing. These were his thoughts in his heart. And in that night he died.”

Mary said to them, “Do not be like this man. Do not put off until tomorrow the use of your possessions. Instead you must sow and reap and plant today so that your barns will be full of fruit.



Years later when Luke was writing his gospel he misunderstood this saying. He thought it meant that the man had concentrated on his plans for his wealth rather than finding the kingdom. Because the idea of a rich man sowing and ploughing was not logical he changed the rich man into a farmer and he made the focus into the building of barns. This is what he wrote:

*And he spoke a parable to them, saying, The field of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought to himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, you fool, this night your soul shall be required of you: then whose shall those things be, which you have provided? So is he that lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (Luke 12)*

And the disciples asked “Mary, how should we sow and harvest?”

And Mary said to them, “You must sow with the word.” And she told them the parable of the sower. This is it as preserved in Thomas. “Behold, the sower went forth, he filled his hand, he cast. Some fell upon the road; the birds came and gathered them. Others fell on the rock, and sent no root down to the earth nor did they sprout any ear up to heaven. And others fell on the thorns; they choked the seed, and the worm ate them. And others fell on the good earth, and brought forth good fruit unto heaven, some sixty -fold and some an hundred and twenty -fold.”

And she explained the story to them thus. “The road represent those who are too busy with the comings and goings of this world. The birds are the devils and thieves who would steal from us the kingdom. The rocks represent those with a hard nature who have no depth. The thorns and the worm represent those given to evil. Those who are the good earth are few in number yet the yield from them is more than abundant.”

“Watch over those in whom the seed is developing. But beware interfering. The seed must grow as it may. Understand there is nothing you can do to make it grow quicker or surer. And do not worry if it seems to you that many strange things are growing along with the good seed. Do not be concerned if the seed of the devil is in the person.” And she gave them another story. Here it is as in Thomas.

“The kingdom of the Father is like a man who had good seed. His enemy came by night, he sowed a weed among the good seed. The man did not allow them to pull up the weed. He said to them: Lest perhaps you go to pull up the weed, and pull up the wheat with it. For on the day of harvest the weeds will be manifest; they will be pulled up and burned.”

“Be patient. While the seed is growing demons will be strong in that person. Do not drive them out, do not try to correct the person, do not try to tell them what to believe or what to do. For even demons may be necessary, even demons may, unknown to

themselves, do the will of the father. And when the harvest comes the demons will be destroyed.”

And the disciples were troubled. Are they right, those who accuse this Mary of being a witch, those who say that Jesus is a devil? And they asked her “How can demons bring forth anything but evil?”

And Mary answered them thus. “There is one inside a man which takes female form, and one inside a woman that takes male form. This one is neither good nor evil, but can partake of both good and evil. This one is the counterfeit spirit. Do not worship that one, but neither despise it. For if you reject it then it will go down to the evil ones within and give them strength.”

And she said these words preserved in the gospel of Mark. “And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.” (Mark 3)

“And so you must divide the realm of Satan. You must secure the help of this counterfeit spirit.” And she added a saying from Thomas, “If two make peace with one another in this or house, they shall say to the mountain: Be moved, and it shall be moved.”

“When the true spirit comes then what is good within the counterfeit spirit will be absorbed into the true spirit and what is evil will be destroyed. But one who worships the counterfeit spirit as the true spirit will be as the heathen.”

And she continued. “Do not ask yourself how the seed grows but be ready for the signs that it has matured and the grain is ready for harvest. May there be among you a man of understanding! When the fruit was ripe, he came quickly, his sickle in his hand, and reaped it.

And this also did Mark write in his gospel.

*So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how. For the earth brings forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he sends forth the sickle, because the harvest is come. (Mark 4)*

And the Gospel of the Twin talks about the need for harvesters:

*Jesus said: The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few; but pray the Lord, that he send forth labourers into the harvest.*

And they asked Mary “Tell us about the harvest?”

“The harvest is the resurrection. The harvest is death and rebirth. The harvest is the attainment of the kingdom of god.”

Thus it was recollected in later years that the harvest marked the coming of the kingdom of god. And it was known also that the kingdom would come while people were alive not after they had died. As was written in Mark:

*And he said to them, truly I say to you, that are some that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. (Mark 9)*

And it says in the gospel of Phillip:

*Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing.*

But the gospel writers misinterpreted these sayings as referring to the second coming of Jesus at the end of time. To them the harvest was the collecting in of the good souls and the burning of the bad souls. For they knew that a person attains the kingdom through the harvest. But they did not know the nature of that harvest.

A saying in the Gospel of the Twin refers to the fact that the harvest could only be experienced by a person who was spiritual in nature -

*Jesus said: He who has in his hand, to him shall be given; and he who has not, from him shall be taken even the little that he has.*

What a person has in hand is seed as in the parable of the sower. Seed is both the result of the harvest and a precondition for the harvest. A person who has seed in hand is a person who has a spiritual nature. They will be able to experience the harvest and as a result will be given far more seed than they started with for the yield of the harvest is super-abundant. A person who does not have ‘seed’ is an un-spiritual person. Such a one will never be able to experience the harvest and, absorbed in worldly cares, will lose the little of the spiritual they initially possessed.

The disciples would have asked Mary more but she was tired and spoke no more that day.

## **The harvest**

Mary cleared her mind, and Jesus was strong inside her, and Jesus merged with her. And these are the words that through Mary, Jesus did speak.

“The grain is my body. I am the bread of life and one who eats of that bread will live. I am the fruit of the harvest and the sickle is my cross. I am the king who will go into the ground and will be reborn into the resurrection. He who knows me will know the end and knowing the end they will know the beginning.”

“The grain is cut by the sickle, the grain enters back into the ground. Into the ground it lies, in the womb of the earth, until it is ready for rebirth. Those who are reborn must pass down to the tomb with me. They must lie there dead and must surrender to the evil ones their garments.”

“They must surrender also hope. They must know the coldness of death. Then when all is blackness they will see that form which they must see. And that form will fill them with horror. For that form is their own soul. That form is the dead one within. That form is a young girl for a man, a young man for a woman. That form is their own little death.”

“Then will my mystery be complete. With me they will they know the resurrection, the rebirth of their spirit. Then if they be a woman they will be reborn in my image, or if a man reborn in the image of Achamoth. Then will life be theirs, the life of white flowers in spring, the life of the new corn.”

“Then will my harvest be complete.”

Thus did Jesus speak through the mouth of Mary.

When many years later the author of The Acts of the Apostles was writing his historical fiction he reflected the tradition that the harvest brings the spirit. For in Acts the spirit descends upon the Apostles on the feast of the Pentecost. This feast is the feast of the harvest, known in Exodus as "the feast of harvest of the first-fruits". At the Pentecost loaves made from the new wheat were offered to Yahweh.

The Apostle Paul compared Jesus directly to the first-fruits:

*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. (1 Corinthians 15)*

The loaves of the Pentecost feast are the body of Jesus which has arisen from the dead. The eating of those loaves symbolises the resurrection of the harvest. Paul also adds:

*You fool, that which you sows is not quickened, except it die: And that which you sow, you sow not what that body shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain. (1 Corinthians 15)*

The fruits of the harvest are the spirit. The grain that is sown is mortal and of the soul. What is reborn is of the spirit:

*It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (1 Corinthians 15).*

And the writers of the gospels too preserved some memory of these mysteries. John talks about the harvest with the fruit being the life eternal:

*Do you not say 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest?' Behold, I say to you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit unto life eternal: so that both he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together. And thus is that saying true, One sows and another reaps. I sent you to reap that on which you spent no labour: other men laboured, and you profit from their labours. (John 4)*

And the gospel of John also talks about the corn having to die and enter the ground to bear life:

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. (John 12)*

The harvest involves the descent into the underworld by Jesus and the redemption of the soul into a living spirit. There are two stories in the gospels that directly recount this redemption experience. Both of them are presented as literal descriptions of someone being raised from the dead.

In the gospel of Mark is the story of Jairus' daughter, the recollection of a man's resurrection. Jairus, who in Mark is 'one of the rulers of the synagogue' comes to Jesus seeking help for his little daughter:

*My little daughter lies at the point of death: come and lay your hands on her, that she may be saved and she shall live. (Mark 5) .*

Before Jesus can go with him a messenger comes from the house of Jairus saying "Your daughter is dead: why trouble the Master any further?". But Jesus said to Jairus "Be not afraid, only believe." He then escorts Jairus back to his house where he says to the mourners "Why make you this ado, and weep? the girl is not dead, but sleeps.". They receive this message with scorn but Jesus goes to the place where the little girl is lying:

*And he took the girl by the hand, and said to her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Little girl, I say to you, arise. And straightway the girl arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. (Mark 5)*

This story tells of the rebirth of the soul of Jairus into the spirit. Jairus and Jesus both start away from where the soul is, characterised as a little dead daughter. The house is the body, the dwelling place of the soul, spirit, angels and demons. Jesus goes to the place of the soul and raises it to life. This is the initiation of the 'harvest'. The very words intoned for a male resurrection are persevered - 'Talitha cumi' or little girl arise. In the story the three are clearly present as Jairus, Jesus and the daughter of Jairus.

The phrase that Jairus uses in his request to Jesus, 'lay your hands on her', is the same used in the Acts for the giving of the spirit. The author of the Acts does not understand how the spirit is given to a person for it is outside his experience. In the laying on of hands he echoes the phrase used in the accounts of the spiritual resurrection without realising that it is a spiritual Jesus who is laying his 'hands' on a soul. This has given rise to the absurdity that the spirit is given by a physical transmission through someone's hands in the same manner as giving a shampoo.

The Valentinian school of Gnostics remembered the true meaning as Irenaeus reports:

*They maintain, further, that that girl of twelve years old, the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, to whom the Lord approached and raised her from the dead, was a type of Achamoth, to whom their Christ, by extending himself, imparted shape, and whom he led anew to the perception of that light which had forsaken her.*

John too wrote into his gospel an account of a person experiencing the resurrection of the soul. In John this person is called Mary of Bethany the sister of Martha. The soul 'brother' of this Mary is called Lazarus. Like the 'daughter' of Jairus this brother appears to die but as Jesus says he only sleeps. As in the story of Jairus, Jesus starts apart from the person and their soul image and then goes to the place where the soul image lies.

The dead person is the soul. The raising to life is the resurrection of the soul to the spirit. In the resurrection the person comes into the light. In the light of the spirit they can see to walk in the way of the father. They are no longer blind. Thus in John's story Jesus says the following words:

Jesus says *"If any man walk in the day, he stumbles not, because he sees the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him."*

Jesus says *"Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."*

*Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, to his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. (John 11)*

These are the words that are close to the original account. But the person who wrote the final version of John presents these sentences intermingled with a story about Jesus running the risks of stoning if he returns to Judea. For he is trying to explain the words 'Let us also go, that we must die with him' not understanding that this is part of a ritual. Now the real meaning is this. Thomas and Didymus both mean 'twin'. They represent the disciples as the 'twin' of Jesus, with Jesus as their higher, perfect brother. They will die symbolically with Jesus in order to experience the resurrection.

After this Jesus says:

*"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die." (John 11)*

But originally instead of 'he that believeth in me' it said something like 'he that knows me'. For Jesus is telling his disciples that they will experience the resurrection in life. For if one's soul is dead then that person is dead. But through the resurrection they will be reborn to life. And once their soul lives it will never die.

Jesus then descends to the grave:

*.. Jesus .. groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. [...] Jesus wept. [...] Jesus therefore .. groaning in himself comes to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. (John 11)*

Jesus suffers as he goes down unto death. John tries to account for this by saying that Jesus' suffering is in response to the grief of Mary even though, in John's story, Jesus knows that Lazarus 'sleeps' and is not truly dead.

*Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid.*

*"Lazarus, come forth." And he that was dead came forth ... (John 11)*

Here the three are Mary, Jesus and Lazarus (the dark third). This whole story has parallels with the resurrection account and may be an alternative recollection of the resurrection experience of Mary the Magdalene. It takes place in Bethany which is traditionally identified with a village close to Jerusalem but which actually means "House of affliction" or "House of misery". This name is appropriate for the place of the dead. (There may have been a real village of Bethany but this has become confused with what originally a symbolic name.) The same name, Bethany, is given in John as the place where Jesus was baptised with the Holy Spirit although in this account it becomes Bethany over the Jordan. The passage over a river is a symbol of the passage to the underworld and 'Bethany over the Jordan' is another reference to the place of the dead. The reason that the descent of the spirit occurs in the "House of Misery" is because it comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the Gospels of belief this has been turned into a story of the spirit descending to Jesus in the symbolic form of a dove whereas in reality Jesus was himself the spirit descending into Mary.

There is another story in the gospels of a visit to the underworld. In the story of the Gadarene demoniac Jesus passes with his disciple in a boat across water to a place of tombs. The boat, the crossing of the water and the tombs are symbolic of the underworld. Before he makes the trip Jesus says:

*'We may pass over to the other side'*

His disciples say to him;

*'Teacher, do you not care that we perish?'*

Jesus replies: *'Peace, be stilled. Why are you so fearful? Have you not faith?'* (Mark 4)

But in the gospels the story is presented in literal fashion as a boat trip across the sea of Galilee. To make sense of the disciples' lament Mark introduces the narrative device of a storm on the sea. Also the words 'Peace, be stilled' are expressed in the story to the sea and not to the disciples.

On the other side, in the underworld, Jesus confronts an army of demons. He is challenged as he sets foot in that land by a demon who represents the whole:

*"What have I to do with you, Jesus, you Son of the most high God? I adjure you by God, that you do not torment me."* (Mark 5)

This represents a tradition that even demonic beings must acknowledge Jesus. The same tradition is found in the account of the crucifixion when the Roman soldiers, originally demons before the story was literalised, bow down to Jesus as king before crucifying him.

Jesus responds to the demon by asking its name:

*And he asked him, What is your name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.* (Mark 5)

Armed with their name Jesus defeats them. But he permits them to go into swine. In the gospels the story is ostensibly about the curing of a demoniac and the swine are a real herd of swine who then charge into the sea. But in Gospel of the Twin swine represent those who are 'hylic' or of the body – that is non-spiritual persons who are only concerned with animal passions and pleasures:

*Jesus said: Give not that which is holy to the dogs, lest they cast them on the dung-heap; cast not the pearls to the swine lest they grind it [to bits].*

Jesus permits the demons to settle in such persons. Once there the demons drive them to their destruction. Passing under the sea is symbolic of passing into Hades and those in



whom the demons rule are driven to dwell in Hades. In the gospel's literal interpretation this is represented by the swine running over a cliff. Why does Jesus not destroy demons? Because he realises that they are all part of God's plan, that they are 'the rulers of this age'.

This story records Jesus' descent to the underworld where he defeats the demons in possession. But the story is incomplete because it does not show the resurrection of the soul into the spirit.

This is not the only time Jesus travels to the underworld by crossing water. Another occasion is the well-known story of Jesus walking on water. This is a reference to Jesus' ability to travel to the underworld, to cross the waters, which has been confused in transmission into the story of a literal miracle.

In Mark there is another oblique reference to the resurrection –

*And having taken a child, he set him in the midst of them, and having taken him in his arms, said to them, 'Whoever may receive such a child in my name, does receive me, and whoever may receive me, doth not receive me, but Him who sent me.' (Mark 9)*

The child is the soul image, the dark third, that is 'received' though the resurrection when it becomes the spirit.

It is possible that the dead or sleeping child as the image of the soul is also behind the strange story of the massacre of the innocents. Possibly this is based upon a story that Jesus was the only soul 'child' to have been saved from death.

In the Acts there is a garbled account of a resurrection story attributed to Paul:

*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third floor, and was taken up dead. Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. Then he went up again, and broke bread, and ate, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. Then they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted. (Acts 20)*

In this strange story Paul, after announcing that the young man is still alive, then leaves him apparently dead to continue the meeting. Only after Paul has left do the others apparently bother to see if the young man is alive! In fact the story has to be interpreted as the resurrection of a soul, represented by the young man Eutychus who falls to earth from heaven (represented by the high window). The soul is apparently dead but Paul knows he is alive and by the end of the session the resurrection is complete. The 'many

lamps' are a reference to the spirit. It means there were many pneumatics possessed by the spirit at the meeting. The breaking of bread represents the death of Jesus. What is happening is that a female disciple is being initiated into the resurrection by Paul and her spirit Eutyclus, has been redeemed from its fallen dead state. The resurrection is itself the dawn and at this time there is much rejoicing that the pneumatics have gained a new initiate.

The Gnostic gospel of Phillip is explicit about the rebirth of the soul. A passage describes how Adam was reborn in the spirit:

*The soul of Adam came into being by means of a breath. The partner of his soul is the spirit. His mother is the thing that was given to him. His soul was taken from him and replaced by a spirit. When he was united (to the spirit), he spoke words incomprehensible to the powers.*

This talks about Adam who represents man and tells of how his soul is replaced by its spiritual counterpart. The mother refers to Achamoth who is in the image of the spirit which replaces his soul. Once he possess his spirit he can overcome the powers of darkness by speaking words which are incomprehensible to them.

Another section of the Gospel of Phillip explains how people can only perceive the truth through types and images:

*Truth did not come into the world naked, but it came in types and images. The world will not receive truth in any other way. There is a rebirth and an image of rebirth. It is certainly necessary to be born again through the image. Which one? Resurrection.*

The resurrection here is described as the 'image of rebirth'. That is it stands for the rebirth but is not in truth the rebirth itself. A person must be reborn through the image, which means they must experience the resurrection themselves although the resurrection, being only an image, is not in a literal sense true. The passage continues:

*The image must rise again through the image. The bridal chamber and the image must enter through the image into the truth: this is the restoration.*

The image that is rising is the soul/spirit and it rises through the image of the resurrection. The second sentence is confused, possibly in transmission. But we can make out its meaning by inserting 'spirit' and 'resurrection' as the two images - "The bridal chamber and the [spirit] image must enter though the [resurrection] image into the truth: this is the restoration." The restoration is when the person is complete – their soul, resurrected as spirit, is restored to the fullness. It is the bridal chamber where this takes place.

Another passage talks about the redemption and the bridal chamber as being mysteries:

*The Lord did everything in a mystery, a baptism and a chrism and a eucharist and a redemption and a bridal chamber. [...] he said, "I came to make the things below like the things above, and the things outside like those inside. I came to unite them in the place."*

The quotation is loosely from the Gospel of the Twin. It records that the accepted rituals of the church, the baptism and the Eucharist, are only two of a series of 'mysteries' that culminate in the redemption and the bridal chamber.

## **The spirit**

The disciples said to Mary “Tell us of the spirit”.

Thus did Mary speak to them; “The spirit is your own sweet essence, the eternal one. The spirit is the gift of summer. It is the white bride, the white bridegroom. It is the white fire, the fire which has form.”

“The spirit is not a person, or a ghost; it is a gateway. A gateway joins two places. The spirit is both yourself and it is your father. It shines like an arch linking you to the things of your father. Through the spirit the light of the father becomes manifest. For it is both you and your father. In the spirit man and god overlap. In the spirit god becomes man and man becomes god. The spirit is the son of man because it descends from man. The spirit is the son of god because it descends from god.”

“For a woman the spirit takes a male form. A woman in her spirit nature is a man. For a man the spirit takes a female form. A man in his spirit nature is a woman.”

At this there was discontent and muttering from the disciples. “But how” they asked her “can we say that a man is a woman in the spirit? Are we to be womanish like a woman? We are men not women.”

And she said to them, “In the kingdom of heaven there is no male and no female. When god made man he made him complete as both male and female. But they were then separated, the female was split from the male. Thus did death come into the world. But in the kingdom what is split will be reunited. A woman must find again the heavenly male who is her husband, a man must find his wife. When you are united with that one then you will be both male and female, hermaphrodite again as man was at the creation.”

Thus is says in the Gospel of Phillip:

*When Eve was still with Adam, death did not exist. When she was separated from him, death came into being. If he enters again and attains his former self, death will be no more.*

And:

*If the woman had not separated from the man, she should not die with the man. His separation became the beginning of death. Because of this, Christ came to repair the separation, which was from the beginning, and again unite the two, and to give life to those who died as a result of the separation, and unite them. But the woman is united to her husband in the bridal chamber. Indeed, those who have united in the bridal chamber will no longer be separated. Thus Eve separated from Adam because it was not in the bridal chamber that she united with him.*

The writers of the four gospels also remembered these truths but, as always, the meaning is changed and hidden. Thus in Mathew Jesus says:

*Have you not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder. (Mathew 19)*

This refers to the union of the spirit but in Mathew it is made to seem as referring to worldly marriage. Yet Mathew records Jesus as adding these words which tell us that there is a secret meaning:

*All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.*

And he continues:

*For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. (Mathew 19)*

The author of Mathew does not understand the concept he is putting forward. Mathew has available to him a saying that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven it is necessary to become hermaphrodite. Thus a man who is joined with his spirit wife is returning to the state before the separation of male and female and is no longer male. But instead of hermaphrodite Mathew uses the word 'eunuch' which is not an accurate equivalent. And so he turns the saying into a trite reflection on chastity.

In John there is the story of the conversion of the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus meets her while he waits for his disciples and asks her for a drink. She is amazed that he, a Jew, is asking a drink from her a Samaritan.

*Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you had known the gift of God, and who it is who is saying to thee, 'Give me a drink' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have not even a vessel to draw with, and the well is deep; from where then do you get the living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who did give us the well, and did himself drink out of it, and his sons, and his cattle?' Jesus answered and said to her, 'Every one who is drinking of this water shall thirst again; but whoever may drink of the water that I will give him, may not thirst again; and the water that I will give him shall become in him a well of water, springing up to everlasting life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come hither.' (John 4)*

Jesus' command, call you husband and come hither, is apparently inexplicable. The woman does not have a husband but has had several lovers and this Jesus knows:

*The woman answered and said, 'I have not a husband.' Jesus said to her, 'Well do you say 'A husband I have not', for five husbands you have had, and, now, he whom you have is not your husband; this you have said truly.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet' (John 4)*

But the husband Jesus is referring to is the woman's spirit. It is her spirit-husband that is the life giving well. Following the conversation at the well Jesus talks to his disciples about the harvest. "Look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." It is the harvest that will bring the woman her husband.

The Gnostic Marcus had the experience of the female spirit as Irenaeus reports:

*He declares that the infinitely exalted Tetrads descended upon him from the invisible and indescribable places in the form of a woman ..*

Irenaeus continues:

*Moreover, the Tetrads, explaining these things to him more fully, said:--I wish to show thee Aletheia (Truth) herself; for I have brought her down from the dwellings above, that thou mayest see her without a veil, and understand her beauty--that thou mayest also hear her speaking, and admire her wisdom.*

The Gospel of Thomas records another experience of the spirit in a saying relating to Jesus' disciple Salome.

*Jesus said: Two shall rest upon a bed; one shall die, the other live.*

This refers to the fact that the spirit or soul is eternal whilst the mortal person will die. The saying continues:

*Salome said: Who art thou; O man? And whose son? Thou hast mounted my bed [or couch], and eaten from my table. Jesus said to her I am he who is from that which is equal; to me was given of the things of my Father. Salome said I am thy disciple. Jesus said to her Therefore I say, when it is equal it will be filled with light, but when it is divided it will be filled with darkness*

Salome has had the experience of the spirit whom she addresses. This male spirit is recognised as a form of Jesus. The spirit has mounted her bed and eaten from her table because he is her 'husband' and is one with her. Jesus is from that which is 'equal', because he forms a union with Achamoth, as signified in the mystery of the bridal chamber. This union results in state of hermaphrodite completeness that is contrasted with the evils of being divided. If the disciple, Salome, is 'equal', that is in a state of union with her spirit, she will be filled with light but if divided she will be filled with darkness.

Mary continued to speak of the spirit thus. “The spirit in male form which comes to women is in the form of Jesus, the son of the father. The spirit in female form which comes to men is in the form of Achamoth, or Wisdom, the loving daughter of the father.”

“Thus it is that for so long men have sought Wisdom. She was present with the father in the eternity before the creation, and she knows of his secrets. She is present with the father at the creation. With him she made the creation and she passed into the creation to give it life. The world is the vessel that contains her, and she is the vessel which contains the world. She is the world and the world is her prison. She is the wood and the rocks. She is the fleet footed deer and she is the wind that blows through the wood.”

“Thus Achamoth has two names. There is she who is imprisoned in the world, whom some call Achmoth or little death, and there is Wisdom dwelling in the splendour of the father, who is called Achamoth the living one.”

“Jesus is Achamoth’s husband, her brother and her son. Jesus descends into the world to redeem Achamoth from the world. He descends into Hades to save little death and bring her into life.”

## **The senses**

And thus spoke Mary:

“You are aware of the five senses; sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Yet I tell you that there is a sense beyond these five senses. It is sight beyond sight. It is hearing beyond sound. It is feeling beyond touch. It is the gift of the spirit and it is the kingdom of heaven. It is the five trees that await you in paradise which are constant summer and winter and whose leaves do not fall.” And Mary said the words that are preserved in Thomas; “I will give you that which eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and hand has not touched, and which has not entered into the heart of man”.

“If a man walks in the day he does not stumble because he sees the light of the world, but if a man walks in the night he stumbles because there is no light in him. There is light within a man of light and it gives light to the whole world. If it does not give light there is darkness. That light is the glory of the spirit. The spirit is the lamp and the light and the eye. Do not hide the spirit. A man does not light a lamp and keep it under a bushel or keep it in a hidden place. But he sets it up on a lamp stand so that all who come and go may see its light. To enter a bridal chamber one must light a lamp or one will be left waiting, a virgin, at the threshold.”

“You who have sight will see the creation as it was created. You will see the trees and the flowers, the stars and the waving grass and you will know them for the first time. You who have sight will see the things of heaven, the powers and the all, and you will know Jesus and Achamoth. You who have sight will look upon your brothers and sisters and you will see them truly and you will love them even in their folly. You will see the demons and the evil powers of this age yet they shall have no power over you for you are above them.”

“Such a one will see that the things that men value are foolishness. The sight of this world deludes men into seeing beauty in a whore. It causes them to treasure worldly riches that are but poverty, and to seek worldly power that is but weakness. How little is man, how quickly brushed away into death, like dead twigs or fallen leaves. How great is man, how imperishable and eternal.”

“Men study the stars, and the heavens and the face of the earth and look for signs! Yet they cannot see what is before them, for if they could then all that is hidden would be revealed. How they turn to the prophets and the scriptures! They consult the dead yet they ignore the living one in their presence. From Adam to John the Baptist there was none greater than John the Baptist, yet there was none who was sighted. But you my children who are reborn shall be greater than John and shall enter the kingdom.”

“Let he who has ears hear! For only to him with hearing will be granted perception. To one with hearing will be given the gift of speaking in the tongue that is beyond all human tongues. Only in that tongue can the words of power be expressed. To such a one will be



given the names of the powers and angels the uttering of which is the gift of summoning. Even the names of men and women and beasts will be theirs. To one with hearing, many truths will be whispered in that one's ear. But what is whispered in secret should be shouted from the rooftops."

"One who can feel without touch will know a spiritual passion beyond the sensual. Into their heart shall be planted the ecstasy of knowledge. A spring of joy shall arise within them and shall overflow in their deeds. They shall feel the way of righteousness by the joy of the spirit and one who walks that way how blessed shall they be!"

"Without sight, sound and feeling how barren is a person! Such a person is imprisoned in matter, in the things of this world, and knows not life. They seek after sensation but lacking sight they find only false sensual pleasures. They seek after knowledge but lacking sight they are trapped in the labyrinth of reason, the labyrinth that knows no sun and leads only to death. They seek after riches but lacking sight they find only the poverty of the material."

These are the words that Mary spoke. And the miracle of giving a person new sight or hearing is mentioned many times in the gospels. But the gospel writers understood not the things of the spirit and interpreted them as being physical miracles. In the gospel of Mark is a story of a blind man who was given sight.

*And he came to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man to him, and asked him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. (Mark 8)*

To make the story realistic Mark has added names and descriptive details. But look beyond the fictional narrative and the truth can be seen. The most curious aspect of this story is the man's response when asked if he could see - "I see men as trees, walking". What Jesus is really conferring is not sight in the physical sense but another way of perceiving things. At the heart of this story is some saying such as; "Jesus gave sight to the blind so that they can see all things, whether men or trees, in truth and not in illusion." But the author of Mark interprets it all literally. So the 'blind' man is taken as being literally blind. But if he is literally blind then how could he see things as an illusion? So the ingenious author of Mark splits the giving of sight into two stages. First he can see, but only as an illusion. Then after a further application of hands he can see in truth.

In truth the blind did not come to see through spitting on the eyes but through the resurrection of the spirit. Another story about a blind man in Mark contains elements of this resurrection.

*... and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard*

*that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, you son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, You son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying to him, Be comforted, rise; he calls you. And he, casting away his garment, haven risen, came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said to him, What would you have me do to you? The blind man said to him, Lord, let me receive my sight. And Jesus said to him, Go your way; your faith has made you whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. (Mark 10)*

The blind man is called to 'rise' and then is recorded as having risen. He casts away his garment. In the Gospel of the Twin and among the Gnostics the garment is a metaphor for the flesh. As it says in Thomas:

*When you unclothe yourselves and are not ashamed, and take your garments and lay them beneath your feet like little children, and tread upon them, then you shall see the Son of the living One, and you shall not fear.*

Casting away the garment signifies assuming the spirit and rejecting the flesh. Jesus also says the blind man 'has been made whole' which is another description of the person with the spirit.

An example of the gift of hearing and speech is also given in Mark:

*.. and they bring to him a deaf, stuttering man, and they call on him that he may put his hand on him. And having taken him away from the multitude by himself, he put his fingers to his ears, and having spit, he touched his tongue, and having looked to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be you opened;' and immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he was speaking plain. And he charged them that they may tell no one, but the more he charged them, the more abundantly they proclaimed it, and they were being beyond measure astonished, saying, 'Well has he done all things; both the deaf he makes to hear, and the dumb to speak.' (Mark 7)*

Once again Mark adds in his novelistic details such as the multitude, the touching of ears and so on. This saying records the close relationship between speech and hearing. By being able to hear the man's tongue is loosened and he can speak. As they say of Jesus 'both the deaf he makes to hear, and the dumb to speak.' But the deaf and dumb are not those who are deaf and dumb literally. What is really happening, and what the author of Mark does not understand, is that the man is being given the gift of tongues.

The descent of the spirit into the apostles giving the gift of tongues is described by the inventive writer of the Acts -

*And in the day of the Pentecost being fulfilled, they were all with one accord at the same place, and there came suddenly out of the heaven a sound as of a bearing violent breath,*

*and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared to them divided tongues, as it were of fire; it sat also upon each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, according as the Spirit was giving them to declare. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation of those under the heaven, and the rumour of this having come, the multitude came together, and was confounded, because they were each one hearing them speaking in his proper dialect, and they were all amazed, and did wonder, saying one unto another, 'Lo, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? and how do we hear, each in our proper dialect, in which we were born?' (Acts 2)*

But some cynics are not convinced saying - "*They are full of sweet wine*" - to which Peter replies "*these are not drunken, as you take it, for it is the third hour of the day*".

This story is fiction written by someone who has no experience of that of which they are writing. The sound out of heaven of 'violent breath' is a nice poetic image of the Holy Spirit descending to earth but has no relation to the spirit in reality. As for the tongues of fire descending these derive ultimately from the Gospel of the Twin:

*Jesus said: I have cast fire upon the world, and behold I guard it until it is ablaze.*

In Acts the gift of tongues is the gift of speaking different languages. This is completely wrong as is shown by Paul's much earlier description in 1 Corinthians:

*for he who is speaking in a tongue, to men he does not speak, but to God, for no one hears, and in spirit he does speak secrets; (1 Corinthians 14)*

Paul is advising his congregation to prophesise rather than to speak in tongues so that they may be intelligible.

*wherefore he who is speaking in a tongue -- let him pray that he may interpret; for if I pray in a tongue, my spirit does pray, and my understanding is unfruitful (1 Corinthians 14)*

The gift of interpreting tongues is not the same as the gift of speaking them. Paul proposes that in meetings only two or three should speak in tongues and then only if one given the gift of interpreting is present:

*if a tongue any one do speak, by two, or at the most, by three, and in turn, and let one interpret; (1 Corinthians 14)*

Paul appears to be anti-tongues partly because of the bad impression that everyone speaking unintelligible gibberish has on potential converts. Yet Paul himself says how he uses tongues more than anyone but only in private:

*I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you. But in an assembly I would rather speak five words through my understanding, so that I might also instruct others, than a myriad of words in a tongue. (1 Corinthians 14)*

Paul's description explains that tongues are really the language of the spirit. They are not a means of communication between men nor are they intelligible to the understanding, not even to the person who utters them. They are a means of speaking the things of the spirit and of uttering the names of the powers. The gift of tongues opens up a universe beyond the spirit. For nothing can be known and nothing can be called unless one has the name of that thing. Unlike a language of man where all who speak that language speak the same words, in the language of tongues words may differ from person to person. This does not matter for the name of a thing in that language is not something that is shared with men but which is whispered in secret. It is not learnt from men, but given by the spirit.

Yet there are also names that are held in common and which are in the tongue. Thus the name Achamoth is in the tongue whereas Sophia or Wisdom is not.

Paul calls tongues the least of the spiritual gifts; yet that it is not. Paul is externally focused and in the external world tongues is a lower gift because it is so easily faked without even the person himself understanding he is faking it. Anyone can make noise on a piano yet to play music is difficult. So can anyone speak gibberish and say, even to themselves, I am speaking in tongues. And in a world where all but a very few are deaf who can tell the difference between one who is striking the keys at random and one who is playing exquisite music? Yet those who can hear, they will hear.

So the gospels gave stories of those who are given sight and hearing. In two of the stories above Jesus uses his spittle to effect the miracle. Is this a realistic detail the author of Mark has made up? No, this too has come from the gospel of the Twin called Thomas as the following saying shows:

*Jesus said: He who shall drink from my mouth shall become like me; I myself will become he, and the hidden thing shall be revealed to him.*

In this saying 'drink from my mouth' means drink his words. Yet the authors of the gospels have misunderstood it to mean that the spittle of Jesus has magical properties to reveal what is hidden, to give sight and hearing. Thus, in Mark, the senses are given by spit rather than spirit.

## **Losing the kingdom**

Mary spoke again to her disciples. “You who have known everything, who rule the world, you are still flesh and blood. Beware the dark ones who would rob you of what you possess. Beware your own weakness, the weakness of flesh and blood that would yet lose you the repose of the Father.” And she told them a story. Here it is as in Thomas:

“The kingdom of the Father is like a woman; carrying a jar full of meal and walking a long way. The handle the jar broke; the meal poured out behind her on the road. She was unaware, she knew not her loss. When she came into her house, she put down the jar and found it empty.”

And they asked her what this meant and she explained it. “The woman has the kingdom yet she has remained busy with the things of this world. She has not given time in solitude for the kingdom to grow strong in her. If you neglect the spirit then the spirit will fade and eventually disappear. Then you will go and find nothing. Every day, every hour you must give time for the spirit. For you each day is the Sabbath and the Sabbath is like each day. You must fast from the things of this world so that you do not get entangled in this world and lose your kingdom.”

And she continued. “Beware those who would rob you of the kingdom. These are the dark ones, the devils. They will enter into you and try to steal what you possess for they hate you beyond all mankind.” And she told them another saying preserved in Thomas:

“It is not possible for anyone to go into the strong man's house and take it by force, unless he bind his hands; then he will plunder his house.”

She explained it thus. “You are like the strong man. If your hands are unencumbered then no one can take you by force. But if your hands are bound by the ties and responsibilities of this world, by a wife or a husband, by children and property, then you lose your strength and the devils may overcome you and steal that which is yours.”

Much later the writer of Mark misunderstood this saying and thought the strong man was the devil and that we must bind him to overcome him. The writers of Luke and Mathew copied Mark in this misunderstanding. But they were wrong, for why should we want to plunder the devils house?

Mary continued, “Be prepared for the thief who comes in the night to steal your treasure.” And she added another saying from Thomas: “If the master of the house knows that the thief is coming, he will keep watch before he comes, and will not let him dig into his house of his kingdom to carry off his vessels. You, then, be watchful over against the world.”

And she told them two more sayings

“The kingdom of the Father is like a man who wanted to kill a great man. He drew the sword in his house and drove it into the wall, that he might know that his hand would be strong. Then he slew the great man.”

“The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard-seed, the smallest of all seeds; but when it falls on tilled ground, it puts forth a great branch and becomes shelter for the birds of the sky.”

Both of these are in Thomas. And Mary explained them thus. “The great man is your spirit who rules in your kingdom. The assassin is a devil who would destroy your spirit and rob you of your kingdom. First he tries his strength in his own house which is your body. Here he will strike. He will fill you with lust or drunkenness or gluttony, he will give you pains and trembling, he will fill your mind with blackness. If you allow him to succeed then he will prove his strength and he will go on to slay your spirit.”

“The grain of mustard-seed is a grain of evil that enters your heart. It may be tiny and insignificant. Yet if you do not root it out, if you allow it even the tiniest space it grow it will spread rapidly. It will be like the mustard plant that spreads faster over tilled ground than any other weed. And it will serve as cover for the birds of the sky. The mustard weed will choke the good corn and the birds it shelters will eat of the good seed and you will lose your crop and the fruit of your labour.”

Many who came after thought the mustard seed was itself the kingdom of heaven growing in a person. So strong was this interpretation that even the Gnostics accepted it. Yet it is clear there is something wrong with this. The mustard plant is not a noble, mighty plant but a small bush-like noxious weed that spreads rapidly over ploughed ground. As a weed it is clearly intended to be negative - in other sayings weeds prevent the seed from growing or are planted by the adversary. The birds that it gives shelter to are also negative agents or thieves as is shown in the parable of the sower. But the mustard seed that grew from something little became confused with the corn itself and so became for many a symbol of the kingdom.

## PART 3 – THE AGE OF THE APOSTLES

### James, Mary and the gospel of belief

Now the behaviour of Mary was displeasing to her family and they considered her as one mad, one possessed by demons. Her family had tried to stop her but she escaped from them. She had told her disciples, “You must leave behind fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. You must follow Jesus instead.” So she disowned her family and her family disowned her.

Yet she had one brother, James, who was less against her than the others. And in this brother James she sowed the seed and one day, years after the start of her ministry, the seed was ripe and ready for harvest. She took her beloved brother James down to the tomb with Jesus and gave him the resurrection. And James saw his spirit.

And after the initiation of James, Jesus spoke to Mary thus. “My heart groans for the sons and daughters of man. For many are called but few are chosen. But even the dogs who come to the table should be allowed to eat off the scraps. It is time to tell my mysteries in a form which all can understand.”

As Jesus says in the gospels:

*I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat (Mark 8)*

The ‘been with me three days’ recalls the descent into the tomb. Yet the multitude have nothing to eat – that is they do not have the bread of life and are still hungry. They have descended to the tomb with Jesus yet have not received the resurrection. In Mark this is followed by the account of the feeding of the four thousand, the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The loaves stand for Jesus himself. Fish under the water are images of the soul but fish that have been raised up out of the deep stand for the spirit. The story is about how the spirit and the bread of life (Jesus) can be split and shared many times and yet there is still more than enough for everyone. Indeed there are even scraps left over – seven large baskets full in the literal account of Mark. And who are the scraps for? Not the gentiles, but those who would feed but do not have the spirit, whether Jew or gentile.

In John there is a story about Jesus appearing to his fishermen disciples by the shore of the sea of Tiberias some time after his resurrection:

*But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, Friends, have you any meat? They answered him, No. And he said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. (John 21)*

What does this mean? The disciples are told not to fish on the left side which stands for the Gnostic spiritual revelation but on the right side which stands for salvation through belief. The reason Jesus tells them to do this is to feed the hungry. The catch on the Gnostic left side was meagre because many are called but few are chosen. The pneumatic elect are few indeed.

But the catch on the right hand side, that of belief, is vast! John is the most spiritual of the gospels yet it is also a gospel of literal belief. In this story we are given the reason why the author of John denies gnosis in favour of belief. But the comparison is false because the nets of belief bring up no fish.

And Jesus continued thus. "There are those who have been given the gift of sight and who can see. They it is whom have known the resurrection and the kingdom. They have the life of the spirit and the riches of heaven. But they are others, poor in spirit, who cannot see. Yet although they cannot see they can still believe. And by this belief they can yet be saved. So my mysteries must be cast in form in which they can believe. They must be told as a story. If a person hears this story and believes in it completely then that person shall also experience a form of the resurrection and rebirth. And to seal this rebirth let that person go down naked into the water and come up as one reborn. For this baptism of water shall stand for my greater baptism of death and rebirth. The stripping off of garments shall stand for the stripping off of the flesh."

"Yet such a one will be reborn blind. As a man may feel the blowing of the wind but not see it so they will feel the spirit inside them but not see it. To them the spirit will be a mystery that comes to them from outside. They will call it the spirit of god and they will not understand that it is indeed themselves. And they will remain a slave to a law. For they will not have the freedom of those who have been given the spirit in truth. But for those who remain slaves I will set up a new law, the law of love."

"In their blindness they will require guidance. It is those who can see who will guide them. For if a blind man lead a blind man, then both fall into a pit. So those who are blind must not lead or judge each other. That must be done by the sighted. For a man should not remove a mote from his brothers eye until he has removed the plank from his own eye."

"Yet those who are blind shall not be least in my sight. Blessed be those who are poor in spirit, those who have not seen yet have believed. They too will gain my kingdom. But they must do so slowly and with much labour and groaning. Instead of the wall being demolished in one instant they must tear it down brick by brick by their good deeds and simple faith. And so they will gradually come into the light. But those who watch over them must be ever vigilant for the signs that one is ready for my mysteries. And thus those who start out blind may also in time be perfected."

Thus it says in John:



*Jesus says to him, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. (John 20)*

And as it says in Mathew as the first of the beatitudes:

*Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Mathew 5)*

And so the mysteries of Jesus were composed in the form of a story. That story was the story of the crucifixion and resurrection. It was the story of how Jesus came down in human form. The story of the son of god who was crucified, who went down into Hades and who was resurrected on the third day. But in this story there was no Pilate, no Romans, no high priests, no Jerusalem. It was a story set without time and place. But those who would believe were told that it really happened, that Jesus really did come down in the flesh, that he really did meet with crucifixion and that he really was resurrected. And all these things were true, but true in a different way than the believer thought. And once the believer was ripe for initiation then they would see Jesus and Achamoth for themselves and would understand the truth of the story in this different way.

And Jesus said to Mary “It is time to stop wandering. Go with James to Jerusalem and there shall James be the head of my church. And look for men who can take my word far and wide to the ends of the earth. For they shall be apostles of the good news.” And thus was it done. James set up a house in Jerusalem and Mary lived quietly with him as his sister. And although James pleaded that he was unworthy he became the acknowledged leader of the Jesus sect. Now Magdalene meaning “the Tower” has another meaning “the Great”. So James took the name “the Less” or “the little” to distinguish himself from Mary. And only those initiated into the mysteries understood that it was James’ sister, keeping quietly in the background, who was the true leader of the Jesus movement.

James also became known as the brother of the Lord and the brother of Jesus. These names were attributed to him because of his relationship to Mary. There were given to him both because he was Mary’s brother, and Mary was believed to be the incarnation of Jesus, and because Jesus was his brother in law (in Aramaic the same as brother) because Mary was Jesus’ ‘sister’ and ‘wife’.

James and Mary were linked in tradition. The Gnostic sect of the Nassenes attributed their teachings to Mary the Magdalene and they said that she had got them from James. It was actually the other way round, that Mary had taught James. The confusion is not surprising as it was James who was the visible head of the church and Mary who visibly was just his devoted sister.

The most persuasive direct link between James and Mary is from the gospel accounts of the passion story. In these accounts three women, Mary the Magdalene, Mary of James and Mary of Joseph are hopelessly muddled providing evidence that all three were really the same.

The oldest gospel, Mark, has Mary the Magdalene and Mary of James visiting the tomb of Jesus –

*And the sabbath having past, Mary the Magdalene, and Mary of James, and Salome, bought spices, that having come, they may anoint him .. (Mark 16)*

However previously in Mark there is a reference to Mary as mother of James and Joses:

*And there were also women afar off beholding, among whom was also Mary the Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses, and Salome ... (Mark 15)*

And there is also another reference to this same Mary as being Mary of Joses –

*and Mary the Magdalene, and Mary of Joses, were beholding where he is laid. (Mark 15)*

In some existing manuscripts Joses is replaced by Joseph in both places. In fact Joses and Joseph are two forms of the same name.

Mark also gives us information about the family of Jesus:

*Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? (Mark 6)*

This information is suspect because of the Christian habit of referring to each other as brothers and sisters. Collectively the followers of Jesus also seem to have been known as the brothers of Jesus or brethren of the Lord. This makes it questionable as to whether some or all of Mark's list are really siblings.

If Mark's list of brothers is taken at face value then Mark's reference to Mary the mother of James and Joses causes a fundamental problem. For Mary the mother of James and Joses must be the same as Mary the mother of Jesus. At this critical moment why does Mark refer to her as the mother of Jesus' brothers rather than as the mother of Jesus himself?

The gospel of Mathew followed Mark in using 'Mary the mother of James and Joses' the first time but then switches to 'Mary Magdalene and the other Mary', perhaps reflecting the authors own doubts on the matter. Luke de-emphasises the women and only refers to their names once as 'Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary of James'. John differs from the others and puts at the foot of the cross 'his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Clopas, and Mary the Magdalene'. In John it is Mary Magdalene alone of the women who goes to the tomb.

What has happened can be reconstructed. Mary, as the unmarried daughter of Joseph, is known by her fathers name as Mary of Joseph. For many years she also lives with her

brother James as part of his household and she becomes known also as Mary of James. Finally she is known among the followers of Jesus primarily as the Magdalene. This has given rise to traditions that the crucifixion and resurrection was witnessed by Mary the Magdalene, Mary of James and Mary of Joseph – in reality all the same woman. Mark has these names available to him and understands that Mary of Joseph and Mary of James are the same person. James is also known as the brother of Jesus and some call Mary the mother of Jesus. He thus interprets Mary of James as meaning Mary the mother of James. The author of Mark knows nothing about Joseph who only becomes the wife of Mary and the step-father of Jesus in the later gospels of Mathew and Luke. He interprets Mary of Joseph in the same way as Mary of James and so mistakenly takes Joseph as the brother of James and hence the brother of Jesus. In one place he inserts the word mother into the description of Mary of James and Joseph (Joses) to make clear to his readers who this Mary of James and Joses is. But he keeps the original form in other places.

When the authors of Luke and Mathew come to write their gospels they follow Mark's mixed use of the names in their passion narratives. However they do know of a Mary of Joseph who they understand is also the mother of Jesus. They interpret this as meaning that Mary the mother of Jesus was married to Joseph.

Finally when the author of John writes his Gospel he deals with the problem presented by Mark's use of Mary mother of James and Joses by making these James and Joses cousins of Jesus. Their mother Mary becomes a sister (cousin) of Mary the mother of Jesus and he calls her husband Clopas which is a variant of the name Alpheus given in Mark as the name of the father of the disciple James. But he also has available to him the same tradition that Mark drew upon that Mary of Joseph was present as an observer of the crucifixion. Writing a good deal later than Mark, and after the nativities of Mathew and Luke have become accepted, the author of John naturally interprets this Mary of Joseph as Mary the mother of Jesus. He therefore puts the mother of Jesus at the foot of the cross.

The other name which occurs in Mark, Salome, is that of the female disciple whom in the Gospel of Thomas says of Jesus '*Thou hast mounted my bed [or couch], and eaten from my table*'. She is a pneumatic Christian who experiences Jesus as a spirit. The description in Thomas recalls the description in John of the disciple whom Jesus loved who appears to share a couch with Jesus. Not that Salome was this disciple who was really Mary. Rather the two women whom both have had direct spiritual experience of Jesus become confused together at times. Salome has experienced the resurrection and her role as a witness of the passion is remembered in the gospels of belief. However her actual experience took place later than Mary's.

The special role of Cephas and Cephas' relationship with James is indicated by the considerable confusion over who was the leader of the early church. The tradition from the beginning of the movement was that the leader was Cephas. Yet the visible leader became James even though the initiated still turned to Cephas as their real leader. This gave two traditions. The stronger tradition was that it was Cephas (Peter) who was the

first leader appointed directly by Jesus. But others said that James, the brother of Jesus, was the early leader.

In Jerusalem, James and Mary searched for those who would be the apostles. One of these was the one who would afterwards be known as Peter. Almost nothing is known of him except that he was a Jew. After his baptism he took his name from Mary's male identity and became Peter. As a result he was later hopelessly confused with Mary's male identity. He went out and became the main apostle of the Jerusalem sect and spread the word far and wide.

## **Paul and Mary**

The followers of Jesus grew in number and the congregation of those who followed in his way became strong. Some among the Jews became alarmed and jealous of the traditions of their fathers. “Who is this James and his vagabond band of followers?” they asked. These were vigilant against the followers of Jesus and sought any opportunity to catch them in blasphemy or violation of the law so they might be stoned or punished.

But James and his followers kept the law in public and they were assiduous in preying in the temple. Those who were against them were not pacified by this behaviour. “They pretend to be like us but they are not! They harbour in their hearts all sorts of blasphemy while openly behaving like good Jews!” (Centuries later this opinion would be echoed by the persecutors of the Gnostics; “They pretend to be like other Christians, they take the same sacraments, yet in their hearts they are heretics!”)

Now one of those who were among this group of persecutors was a man called Saul. He was enraged by the Jesus followers and determined to spy on them and expose their blasphemies. To do so he penetrated one of their sects. There he was baptised. There he participated in the outer mysteries intended for those taking their first steps on path to truth. There he was taught the myth of the crucified Jesus. There he heard for the first time the secret sayings. But of their inner meaning he knew not, for he had not been reborn, not even with the lesser rebirth of baptism, for he had entered the water with a lying heart.

When the time was right for his purposes Saul exposed the practises and beliefs of those who he had called brother and sister. Many were brought before the priests for judgement and many suffered at their hands. And the enemies and persecutors of the Church of Jesus drew strength and ammunition from the revelations of Saul.

But within Saul, unbeknown to himself, the seed had been sown. The seed grew even as he plotted against the brethren, and ripened even as he cast upon them the fire of his hatred. Indeed the sowing of the seed itself fed his hatred, for it unleashed many devils within him, and these devils were driven to fury by their premonition of the ending of their realm.

And so the grain grew and one day it was ripe. Who would come with the sickle to gather it into the barns?

What is certain at this point is that Paul experienced the pneumatic resurrection. Jesus appeared before Saul in a vision. He saw Jesus crucified and was crucified with him and went down into darkness. And in the tomb he experienced the three forsaken by God. And there also Paul saw the angel of the resurrection. “I am your spirit” she told him. “I am the gate through which Jesus will become you”.

As Paul later wrote:

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; (Galatians 2)*

The tradition was that Paul's conversion was spontaneous. In the Acts Jesus comes to Paul in a blinding vision on the road to Damascus. Although there is little reason to believe anything in the Acts which were written long after the events by one who was not a pneumatic, Paul's own account records a less dramatic but apparently spontaneous conversion:

*And I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not according to man, for neither did I receive it from man nor was I taught it, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ. You did hear of my behaviour once in Judaism, how I persecuted exceedingly the church of God, and tried to waste it. Of how I was more advanced in Judaism than many Jews of my own age, being more abundantly zealous of my fathers' deliverances. And when God was well pleased, having separated me from the womb of my mother, and having called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might proclaim the good news among the nations, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away to Arabia, and again returned to Damascus. (Galatians 1)*

Although this seems to rule out the participation of any other person a closer reading shows that this is not the case. Paul believes that his Gospel comes direct from Jesus Christ. In this belief he is not, as his often presented, out on a spiritual limb and teaching his own visions in preference to the actual teachings of Jesus. The Gospel of the Twin shows that Paul was simply stating what was true in the early Jesus movement about any pneumatic:

*Jesus said: I am not thy master, because thou hast drunk, thou hast become drunk from the bubbling spring which I have measured out.*

A person having the spring of the spirit inside them does not require any external instruction – indeed to place the words of any teacher above that spring is blasphemy.

What Paul does not make clear was whether the revelation of Jesus Christ occurred through the medium of any other person. The early Christians believed that Jesus was present in Mary/Cephas. So the revelation of Jesus Christ could have come through a meeting with Mary, a meeting that resulted in Paul's own pneumatic resurrection, from which point Paul could see Jesus spiritually himself without the medium of Mary.

Paul says that he 'conferred not with flesh and blood' but then Paul did not believe that Jesus who expressed himself through Mary was 'flesh and blood' but a spiritual man. Also the 'flesh and blood' may have referred to the non-spiritual component of his own nature. As the Gospel of the Twin says, *What thy right hand shall do, let not thy left hand know what it does.* The spiritual right hand set off for Arabia and did not consult the bodily left hand that would have urged self-interested hesitation.

So Saul changed his name to Paul and for three years dwelt in Arabia. After the three years he came to Jerusalem for fifteen days in order to get acquainted with Cephas/Peter. The visit to Cephas is another piece of evidence that Cephas originally gave him the pneumatic resurrection. What could be more natural than that Paul should return to visit again the person who had initiated him in the Jesus movement? It is clear that Paul had been on probation for the three years although doubtless Paul himself would not have seen it in these terms. When he returns he is ready to be appointed an apostle and to commence his real mission.

Later in his letter to the Corinthians Paul was to write some of what Mary had taught him:

*For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, how Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at one time; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born through a miscarriage. (1 Corinthians 15)*

Now Paul in his epistles to the early Christian churches was writing to his two audiences both psychics and pneumatics. He writes a literal message for the psychic who must understand the story of Jesus literally and he writes a spiritual message for the pneumatic who discerns things spiritually. Those who have a literal understanding will interpret this passage as an account of witnesses to the resurrection so that their faith may not be disturbed. But to the spiritual person it gives a history of early Christianity. For the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus was not an historical event but was experienced spiritually by each in turn. For it was this death, burial and resurrection that brought the rebirth in the spirit.

Paul gives the order in which people came to the crucifixion and resurrection. In this passage the whole history of the early Jesus movement is set out.

First he lists Cephas. It is clear that this person, Cephas, the first person to witness the resurrection of Jesus must be the founder of Christianity. The knowledge shared by only a few is that Cephas is the code name for Mary the Magdalene who is not openly mentioned at all.

Next comes the Twelve whom Cephas/Mary initiated into the resurrection.

Then comes the period when the twelve went out and taught in Jesus' name. They sowed and watered and when the crop was ready for the harvest they brought the person back to Mary for the rebirth of the resurrection. Paul records that five hundred brothers (the word would include sisters as well) experienced the resurrection in this time. Paul writes 'at one time' but the meaning may be 'all together' or Paul himself may have misunderstood what Cephas has told him.

After this period of the mission a new phase starts with the conversion of Mary's brother James. This is followed by the initiation of the apostles the last of which was Paul himself.

Paul speaks of his birth as being by a "miscarriage". The Greek word *ektrwmati* comes from the words meaning 'out' and 'wound'. It can mean an abortion or a miscarriage. Paul's use of this term might be taken to indicate a spontaneous pneumatic resurrection, one that took place before its natural term and without the presence of a midwife.

Yet there is a deeper meaning. The birth of the pneumatic resurrection occurs by the crucifixion and death of Christ. It is literally a wounded birth, in the sense of a birth given through blood and suffering and death. It is a miscarriage which yet results in the miracle of life.

There is also a possible connection with the passion story in John where the soldiers stick a spear in Jesus' side and out flows blood and water. It could be that this story is a misunderstanding of metaphor that was not originally intended to be taken literally. The fluids recall those emitted from a miscarriage. The blood and water are also deeply symbolic, with the water standing for the spirit. The water of the spirit flowing out of the wound in Jesus' side would be a very literal interpretation of *ektrwmati*.

This word 'miscarriage' has given great problems to those who understand the truth of Jesus as a literal story. Why does Paul use this offensive and puzzling term? To keep their readers asleep translators have resorted to translating it in words that have a range of meanings which are not in the original but which give comfort to the orthodox. So they use terms such as 'abnormally born' or 'untimely born' which are intended by their psychic translators to convey the idea that Paul's rebirth took place later or had a different nature from that of the other witnesses to the resurrection. In this way they suggest meanings to their readers that are simply not in the original words.

Now Paul in his epistles took great pains to hide the identity of Mary. Cephas is mentioned sparingly, always in male terms, and is not identified explicitly as the founder. Moreover there is confusion with the apostle Peter. In Galatians Paul refers both to Cephas and Peter much to the confusion of later copyists who assumed that the Aramaic Cephas and the Greek form Peter referred to the same person. And this confusion was not entirely accidental since both Paul and Mary recognised the necessity of hiding Mary's identity. So it was that in Galatians one copyist ended up writing Cephas in one place and Peter in another while another copyist might reverse this usage. So it is impossible today to tell, in which places Cephas would have been written and in which places Peter.

Now although Mary could see the spirit was strong in Paul she also doubted him. "He has been so wedded to the law that even as he proclaims his freedom from the law it warps his thinking. He interprets the crucifixion of the Christ as an offering to redeem us from sin. He fears women even as he despises us. Jesus appearing through a woman is



for him an embarrassment and humiliation. He calls me Cephas to my face as if by doing so he can make me male. How fervently he believes that Jesus will appear in his own body and how he longs for this coming!”

Yet when she filled herself with Jesus she knew his purpose. “My brother Paul will be the greatest of our apostles. He will be faithful to Jesus and loyal to Mary. It matters little if he interprets me through his own understanding for that is only as all men and women do. It is not how a person thinks of me but how he becomes me that is important. And Paul burns with my fire.”

Before Paul left Jerusalem Mary appointed Paul as an apostle, the last of all her apostles. She sent him away to carry the good news to the non-Jews of the nations.

And Paul was loyal to Mary. Although he wrote about Cephas but little in his epistles the few quotes show his opinion of her. In 1 Corinthians Paul writes:

*For it was told to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. And I say this, that each one of you says, 'I, indeed, am of Paul' or 'I of Apollos,' or 'I of Cephas,' or 'I of Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? {1 Corinthians 1}*

Paul is addressing the church at Corinth which has fallen into internal factions and divisions. Apollos is a rival preacher who has been teaching the flock at Corinth and whose teachings are the root of the problem. He has been teaching a version of the good news which is different from Paul's.

Now 'Chloe' is a female Greek name that means young green growth or tender verdure. It is one of the names of the goddess Demeter. Chloe is an apt description of the male spirit newly reborn – the first green growth of the resurrection, the shooting of the grain that has been harvested and has come to new life. So when Paul says 'by those of Chloe' he is speaking about those of the spirit, the pneumatic elect.

Paul lists himself and Apollos as the two teachers, and then Cephas and Christ as the two authorities. By including Cephas and Christ in his list Paul is exaggerating in order to make the divisions appear absurd. Dividing into factions around Paul and Apollos is as ridiculous, he says, as dividing into factions around Cephas and Christ. 'Has Christ been divided?' he asks rhetorically, meaning can you divide Cephas from Jesus, a question as absurd as asking "Was Paul crucified for you?". For Jesus is the spirit of Cephas and Christ symbolises the wholeness of a person and their spirit.

The ironic question 'Has Christ been divided?' echoes a saying in Thomas:

*(72) [A man said] to him: Speak to my brethren, that they may divide my father's possessions with me. He said to him: O man, who made me a divider? He turned to his disciples (and) said to them: I am not a divider, am I ?*

There is a further mention of Cephas later in 1 Corinthians:

*So then, let no one glory in men, for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things about to be - all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. (1 Corinthians 3)*

In this passage Paul makes a list of contrasting pairs – Paul and Apollos (the two rival preachers), life and death, the present and the future. In this pairing Cephas is contrasted to ‘the world’ or ‘the cosmos’ or system. For Paul this world is under the control of evil forces ‘the rulers of this age’. Cephas offers a way to escape these evil forces, a gateway to another and ultimate reality beyond the world, the reality of Jesus and God the father.

The final reference to Cephas in 1 Corinthians is Paul’s justification of himself as an apostle.

*Am not I an apostle? Am not I free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of my apostleship are you in the Lord.  
My defence to those who examine me in this;  
have we not the power to eat and to drink?  
have we not the power a sister, a wife, to lead about, like the other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?  
or only I and Barnabas, have we not the power to not work? (1 Corinthians 9)*

In this section Paul is giving his credentials both as an apostle (am I not an apostle?) and more importantly as one of the pneumatic elect (am I not free?). He gives his defence as if testifying in a court of law and mentions three points.

First that he has the power to eat and drink. The eating of the bread is the pneumatic becoming Christ, the drinking of the wine is the pneumatic becoming filled with the spirit.

Second he has the power to lead about a sister and wife. The sister and wife is the male pneumatics’ female spirit. (Paul almost always refers to these things from a man’s perspective and takes the male case as encompassing the female case.) He here links himself to some of the others who have this power – the other apostles, the brethren of the Lord and Cephas. All three groups are included in Paul’s list of the resurrection. One named individual, Cephas, is quoted as the acknowledged pre-eminent example of this power of spiritual union. Of course Cephas does not have a sister and wife but a brother and husband, namely Jesus, but Paul is not about to jeopardise her cover.

Third is the power of the pneumatic not to work – to be saved by their very nature as a pneumatic and not by ‘works’ like the psychic. This power Paul mentions ironically, for he and Barnabas do nothing but work; they have renounced their pneumatic privileged and lowered themselves to the psychic level for the sake of the task of redeeming the psychics.

This passage is followed immediately by a discourse on the right of a preacher to be supported by their flock and on his and Barnabas' renunciation of this right. As ever Paul speaks on two levels, to the psychic as well as the pneumatic, and cloaks his words so as to upset the psychic's simple faith.

There are the apparent references to Cephas in 1 Corinthians. But there is another reference that is coded and yet more explicit.

*Moreover, brethren, I would not want you to be ignorant of how all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. They were all baptized by Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10)*

Paul is comparing the early Christians to the Israelites under Moses during the flight from Egypt. He alludes to the two forms of baptism, by the water, and in the cloud. The cloud is the spirit of god that guided the Israelites so baptism in the cloud is baptism in the spirit. The point he goes on to make is that although they ate the spiritual food and drank the spiritual drink and had been through a form of baptism in both water and the spirit, god was displeased with the Israelites and made them wander 40 years in the wilderness. Likewise, Paul is saying, the early Christians, even those who have been baptised with the spirit, can still displease god by their bad conduct and so may not see the promised land.

The key point is the reference to the spiritual rock. This is the rock which Moses struck at Rephidim and which, according to a rabbinical legend, actually followed the people around in the form of a fifteen foot high stone gashing water! Why does Paul draw on this absurd legend and equate this rock to Christ? Paul is alluding to Cephas (meaning "the rock"). He is equating Cephas to Christ. Just as the Israelites drunk spiritual water from a rock that was really Christ so the Christians are drinking spiritual water from a rock (Cephas) that is really Christ. As it says in the Gospel of the Twin:

*Jesus said: He who shall drink from my mouth shall become like me; I myself will become he, and the hidden thing shall be revealed to him.*

The rock is in itself contemptible just as Cephas, as Mary, is a mere contemptible woman. Yet it is the instrument of gods will in giving his chosen people spiritual water to enable them to survive the desert. The Jews also attributed a mystic meaning to the rock. Philo the Jew says of this rock that it is "the Wisdom of god".

## **The church of Peter and Mary**

Jesus spoke to Mary and said thus. “You must build not one but two churches. The first church will be the church of Cephas. Your apostles Paul and Peter shall build it. It will be for those who believe, the poor in spirit, and they shall be blessed. But hid within its body, like leaven in bread, shall be some who are of the kingdom. They shall guide their brothers and sisters who stumble in the dark and bring some into the light. Yet the day will come when they shall be rejected and persecuted for the blind shall be envious of them. This church of Peter shall grow great and rich and yet it will always be the church of poverty.”

“The second church will be the church of Mary. It will be for those who are of the kingdom. This church shall never be great or powerful by the terms of this world, it shall never grow large for those who are worthy shall be few. It will suffer persecution and destruction yet it shall rise again and shall be greater than the church of Peter.”

“Yet the greater truth shall be this – the Church of Peter and Mary, although two are truly one.”

“Our work here is finished. You must leave our brother James to lead our first church for he is worthy. You must go now and build our second church yourself.”

So Mary left Jerusalem. Some say she went to Syria to build her church there and others that she went down to Egypt, to Alexandria. It was perhaps at this time that Mary composed the earliest form of the Gospel of the Twin, now called the gospel of Thomas, which was intended to be used by both her churches.

The first church, the church of Peter, did indeed thrive. Yet within a century or two those who had the secret knowledge had been evicted from it. It was then a church of the blind leading the blind. The central myths were preserved in stories which all had to take literally. Only by believing completely and unreservedly in them could the spiritual transformation of baptism by water take place. Thus it was a necessity in this church of Peter to banish all those who disturbed this belief.

The second church, the church of Mary, also grew. It was the church of those who knew, the Gnostics. Yet this church also weakened with time. It split into factions and there were many who called themselves Gnostics who did not possess the spirit. Eventually the first church grew so powerful that it became the state religion of the Roman Empire. Then the church of Peter destroyed the Church of Mary, and the Gnostics were outlawed as heretics, for the blind will always bear hatred for the sighted who see what the blind cannot even comprehend.

## **Mary and the Gospel of the Twin**

Mary signed her Gospel of the Twin, now known as the Gospel of Thomas, at both the beginning and the end. The beginning of the gospel contains these words:

*These are the secret words which the living Jesus spoke, and Didymus Judas Thomas wrote them down. And he said: He who shall find the interpretation of the words shall not taste of death.*

Now both Didymus and Thomas both mean 'twin'. Originally the gospel was by the 'twin' of Jesus. But as the gospel was passed down and translated into different languages the word for twin was translated as the proper name Thomas. And so 'Judas' was added to the name because it was believed that this Thomas must be Judas Thomas.

So Thomas is really the gospel of the 'twin' of Jesus. But this 'twin' of Jesus was Mary for Jesus was her spiritual twin. The living Jesus spoke the words to Mary who wrote them down. Was the word twin repeated twice in the original version and was this the reason for the confusion of later copyists and translators? This could be so for 'twin' can also refer to Mary and Cephas the two identities of Mary. So the writer Mary/Cephas is the twin twin of Jesus.

After this introduction the next saying is:

*Jesus said: He who seeks, let him not cease seeking until: finds; and when he finds he will be troubled, and if he is troubled, he will be amazed, and he will reign over the All.*

This sets out the course of searching for and finding the kingdom. After this saying comes the start of the sayings proper. The first saying of this main section says that the kingdom is not in the heaven or the sea but is within you and outside you. This first saying is symmetrical with a saying at that end that says the kingdom is spread upon the earth and men do not see it. It is as if the two form bookends surrounding the main gospel.

Yet there is one further saying that seems out of place as it comes after the final 'bookend'. It is also in a form which differs from the others. This has lead many to believe that this final saying was added later. Yet the saying can be read as being symmetrical with the introduction before the first bookend. The saying is this:

*Simon Peter said to them: Let Mary go forth from among us, for women are not worthy of the life. Jesus said: Behold, I shall lead her, that I may make her male, in order that she also may become a living spirit like you males. For every woman who makes herself male shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

This is the mark of Mary. Just as the introduction talks about the 'twin' (repeated twice) of Jesus so this saying mentions explicitly the three aspects of Mary as Jesus, Cephas

(here Simon Peter) and herself. Just as the introductory saying before the main section lays out the plan of seeking and finding, so the last saying sums up explicitly the result of that search. A woman must make herself male to become a living spirit and so enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus leads her into the kingdom and makes her male to become a living spirit. The saying is deeply ironic because what is not said is that a man must make himself female to enter the kingdom. As normal her Cephas self has got it completely wrong. By ruling out females from the kingdom he would be ruling out himself because spiritually a man is female.

The Gospel of The Twin was used in both her churches. It was the secret knowledge that Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians:

*Yet we speak of wisdom among the initiated (the perfect), a wisdom not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are becoming useless, but we speak the hidden wisdom of God in a secret, that God foreordained before the ages to our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for if they had known, they would have not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it has been written, 'What the eye did not see, and the ear did not hear, and which has not arisen in the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him'. (1 Corinthians 2)*

The final sentence is a quotation from the Gospel of the Twin. The rulers of this age are the demonic beings whom Paul believed were responsible for the crucifixion. It is this crucifixion, experienced by the initiate, which leads to the spirit and the kingdom of heaven.

The writers of the gospels of Mark, Mathew, Luke and John all had the Gospel of the Twin available to them as part of the common heritage of Christianity. Yet the sayings were esoteric and each gospel writer attempting to fit the sayings in to their narrative made mistakes of understanding. With time the sayings fell into disuse in the church of Peter for the new gospels of Mark, Mathew, Luke and John were straightforward and simple and did not present the reader with an enigma like the Gospel of the Twin.

Even in the Church of Mary the new gospels gained currency. The Gospel of the Twin was contaminated as copyists adjusted some sayings to fit in with their understanding from the new gospels. For it was the fate of the Gospel of the Twin to be copied and translated by those who did not understand the true meaning of the sayings. What has been passed down as the Gospel of Thomas has been translated form the original at least twice and is a corrupt version. The gospel gradually faded into obscurity until the church of Peter became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Then Mary's original gospel was banned as heretical and to possess a copy would get a Gnostic condemned to death. Yet a single copy of the gospel was saved for it was buried by a monk in an earthenware jar in a desert in Egypt along with many other Gnostic works. And almost two thousand years later, at the end of the greatest war that mankind had ever experienced, the Gospel of Thomas was again recovered.

## **Paul, James and Peter**

So Mary left the church of Cephas in the hands of James and her apostles the chief of whom were Paul and Peter. But contention broke out among the Jerusalem apostles and Paul. For James was steadily taking the church closer to the Judaism. He prayed in the temple every day. He sought out some in the Pharisee party as allies. If the church of the Jesus began accepting converts who were plainly outside the Jewish law then these tactics of James would be thwarted. The Jews would reject him and his people completely and they would be cast out and stoned as blasphemers.

But Paul was preaching to the gentiles and preaching freedom from the law. His teaching on this point was that of Mary's, of freedom in the spirit, and could not be reconciled to Judaism. So conflict erupted between Paul and the other apostles in Jerusalem.

James had been appointed by Cephas as the head of the church and was revered by Christians as their leader. As it says in Thomas:

*The disciples said to Jesus: We know that thou wilt go from us. Who is he who shall be great over us? Jesus said to them: Where ever you be you shall go to James the Just [..].*

By opposing James, Paul put himself in a position of direct conflict against the leadership of the church. To justify himself Paul always stressed the primacy of the spirit and direct revelation of Jesus. But he also drew on the fact that his own appointment derived directly from Cephas and so was equivalent to that of his opponents. He writes about his early meeting with Cephas in Galatians:

*Then, after three years I went up to Jerusalem to enquire about Cephas [some ms Peter], and remained with him fifteen days, and other of the apostles I did not see, except James, the brother of the Lord. And the things that I write to you, I swear to you before God that I do not lie. Then I came to the regions of Syria and of Cilicia, and was unknown by face to the assemblies of Judea, that are in Christ .. {Galatians 1}*

In this passage Paul mentions James almost in passing even though it is James who was the figurehead of the church. Paul met James because Mary was staying at his house as his sister but he does not regard him being particularly important. He is vehement that he has met none others of the Jerusalem party even though, traditionally, James and Cephas are the leaders of this party! If Cephas and the apostle Peter are the same then the evidence Paul gives in this passage of the fifteen day stay with Cephas, to be acquainted with him or to receive instruction from him, contradicts the very point he is so keen to make. The reason he is so emphatic is that Cephas is not one of the Jerusalem apostles but an authority above them. He is stressing that insofar as he received instruction through any human agency it was through Cephas and not from the Jerusalem apostles lead by James, Peter and John. Since these Jerusalem apostles also received their instruction from Cephas he is putting himself on a level with them.

To resolve the dispute Paul travels to Jerusalem to meet with James, Peter and John. He is concerned that his version of the good news will be rejected and he will be forced either to change his teaching or go into open conflict with the church. However the Jerusalem apostles do not reject Paul's gospel. The strength of Paul's position is that on the contentious point he is aligned with the teachings of Cephas. So instead they place a restriction on him – he is only to preach to the gentiles and not the circumcised. In this way they hope to avoid conflict with the Jews. Paul presents this as a triumph – he is to be apostle to the gentiles and Peter to the Jews. However this is not what the Jerusalem apostles intended! They also will preach to the gentiles but their converts will be circumcised and brought within Judaism. This is Paul's version of events:

*Then, after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, having taken with me also Titus; and I went up because of a revelation, and did submit the good news that I preach among the gentiles, privately to those who are esteemed, lest I might run in vain; but not even Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And all this because of the false brethren who were brought in unawares and who did come in to secretly to spy out our liberty that we have in Christ Jesus, that us they might bring us under bondage. But to them we did not submit to even for an hour so that the truth of the good news might remain to you. And those who were esteemed to be something, whether they were or not makes no difference to me for God does not accept the appearances of man, those thus esteemed did not add anything. But, on the contrary, having seen that I have been entrusted with the transmission of the good news to the uncircumcised, as Peter has with the circumcised, for he who did work with Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, did work also in me in regard to the gentiles, and having known the grace that was given to me, James, and Peter [some ms Cephas], and John, who were esteemed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas a right hand of fellowship that we should go to the gentiles, and they to the circumcised. They added only that we should be mindful of the poor, the very thing that I was diligent to do. (Galatians 2)*

In this passage Peter is clearly designated as an apostle. Yet in 1 Corinthians Cephas is twice listed separately from the apostles. This is another proof that Cephas and Peter are different people.

The conflict does not end there. The Jerusalem party do not recognise that Paul has any exclusive right to preach to the gentiles. They still attempted to persuade Paul's Jewish followers to submit to the law at least in public. They attempted to get his gentile converts to accept circumcision. Paul in turn was incensed with the Jerusalem apostles for sacrificing the freedom in the spirit for political expediency.

*And when Peter [some ms Cephas] came to Antioch, I confronted him to his face because he was blameworthy. For before certain came from James, he was eating with the gentiles, but when they came he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those of the circumcision. Other Jews also did dissemble with him so that Barnabas also was carried away by their dissimulation. But when I saw that they did not walk upright to the truth of the good news, I said to Peter before all, 'If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of the*



*gentiles and not in the manner of the Jews, why do you compel the gentiles to Judaize?'*  
(Galatians 2)

Paul was to win. The churches he founded expanded rapidly among the gentiles and his version of the good news began to predominate. Meanwhile James' rapprochement with the Jews ended in failure and James himself was put to death for blasphemy. After the destruction of the temple the Jews were no longer a force to be reckoned with and the church of Jesus became anti-Jewish. So the memory of James' early leadership of the church began to fade into obscurity. This is why the Catholic church traced its roots from Peter (Cephas) and Paul and not from James. This is why the brother of Mary, and the brother of the Lord, James, became all but written out of the official history of the church.

## **Paul and the veiling of Achamoth**

The Gospel of Phillip talks about the mystery of the bridal chamber.

*No one can know when the husband and the wife have intercourse with one another, except the two of them. Indeed, marriage in the world is a mystery for those who have taken a wife. If there is a hidden quality to the marriage of defilement, how much more is the undefiled marriage a true mystery! It is not fleshly, but pure. It belongs not to desire, but to the will. It belongs not to the darkness or the night, but to the day and the light. If a marriage is open to the public, it has become prostitution, and the bride plays the harlot not only when she is impregnated by another man, but even if she slips out of her bedroom and is seen. Let her show herself only to her father and her mother, and to the friend of the bridegroom and the sons of the bridegroom. These are permitted to enter every day into the bridal chamber. But let the others yearn just to listen to her voice and to enjoy her ointment, and let them feed from the crumbs that fall from the table, like the dogs. Bridegrooms and brides belong to the bridal chamber. No one shall be able to see the bridegroom with the bride unless he become such a one.*

The bridal chamber is where the person, in the form of their ‘perfect self’ and their spirit are combined in the mystic marriage. The female component, the pure and virgin bride, must be kept secret. She is for the eyes of her husband only and for the children of the bridal chamber. Others must not see her or she will be turned into a whore.

Paul talks about the same concept, when he appears to be sermonising about women being veiled in church.

*But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the husband [or man]; and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11)*

Paul believes that in the mystic marriage what is male has authority over what is female, and what is female is the glory of what is male. A head of the female part of the hermaphrodite person/spirit couple is her husband the male component. So a woman’s head is her spiritual husband. But the man’s head is not his spirit but the perfect man in the image of the Christ. This relationship between a person and their spirit echoes the relationship between Jesus and Achamoth whereby Jesus has authority over Achamoth. Paul continues:

*Every man praying or prophesying, having his head uncovered, honours his head. But every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. (1 Corinthians 11)*

The phrase ‘have her head covered’ does not refer to wearing a hat but to wearing a veil. Superficially Paul is giving instructions as to how women should worship. There is

nothing in the passage to say that such worship should be in 'church' or a community situation – Paul's instructions would seem to apply equally to a woman in private. Neither does Paul make any suggestion that a woman should be veiled in the Christian community when she is not praying or prophesying. Of course many have interpreted this passage as applying to church but that is because they have a preconception that Paul is addressing the question of decency in communal worship.

In other places Paul makes it clear that his vision of prayer is two fold. A person prays with both his understanding and his spirit. In Romans 8 Paul says *'for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered'*. Later in 1 Corinthians he says *'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also'*. As to prophesying it is clearly the spirit that is involved. So both prayer and prophesying are times when the person is in a state of union with their spirit. But the union with the spirit is the same as entering the 'bridal chamber' and Paul's instructions do not refer to church but to the bridal chamber.

What does Paul mean when he talks about a woman being shorn? Having the head shorn was a punishment for the adulteress. So when Paul says that a woman who 'prays or prophesies' unveiled should be shorn, he means that she is being an adulteress to her husband. The concept is the same as expressed in the Gospel of Phillip. Even by showing her self to other men (who are not themselves children of the bridal chamber) the bride is playing the whore.

So the provision for veiling of the woman is directed at the bride in the bridal chamber. It can be understood at two levels. First a woman who enters the bridal chamber by entering a state of union with her male spirit in a sense becomes Achamoth herself. The veiling of the woman physically is therefore symbolic of the veiling of Achamoth, the bride, as she meets Jesus the bridegroom. So Paul is saying that a woman should be veiled whenever she enters a state of spiritual union whether or not this is in public because at such times she represents Achamoth. But there is second deeper meaning. The bride is also the man's female spirit. Paul is saying that men should keep this spirit veiled and not expose it to the gaze of others who are not children of the bridal chamber. A woman, on the other hand, whose male spirit is in the image of the Christ, can talk about her spirit freely and openly.

*For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. (1 Corinthians 11)*

Here Paul is expressing traditional Jewish concepts by regarding the bride of the mystic union as being created for the benefit of the bridegroom. The phrase 'the woman of the man' recalls the separation of the male and female in the Garden of Eden. It was this separation which introduced death into the world and which the mystic union of the bridal chamber corrects. The bridegroom, in the image of god himself, shines with the

light or glory of the father, while the bride, like the moon reflecting the light of the sun, shines with the reflected light of the bridegroom.

*For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. (1 Corinthians 11)*

This little phrase causes great problems for the conventional interpreters of Paul. He appears to believe, naively, that an unveiled woman in church would arouse the lust of the angels! But the Gnostics would have understood this differently. The angels are the agents and messengers of Yahweh whom the Gnostics believed was the demiurge. Yahweh thinks he is the ultimate god. But this is not true for he is really the lower god, or demiurge, being the son of Achamoth. Men and women have within them part of Achamoth so that they also, although appearing lowly, are in reality above Yahweh. If the angels of Yahweh were to discover this image of Achamoth within the heart of men then Yahweh, the jealous god, would be enraged. The same does not apply to the Christ, as Yahweh believes, wrongly, that Jesus is his son. It follows that Christians can speak openly about the Christ but must keep the bride, Achamoth, veiled and in secret.

This phrase is one of the indications Paul subscribed to this view that Yahweh was the demiurge. In general Paul regards angels as being malevolent forces. In Romans 8 he lists angels among the things that shall not *'separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'*. In 1 Corinthians 4 he talks about the apostles being *'made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men'*. In 2 Corinthians 11 he says *'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light'*. In Galatians 1 he warns about false teachings from angels – *'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed'*. Particularly telling is a phrase in 1 Corinthians 6:

*Know you not that we shall judge angels?*

Paul clearly believes that man is above the angels, and shall have the right to judge them. In Galatians he talks about the role of angels in bringing the law. In Paul's view the law was not part of the original promise made to Abraham but was a temporary addition made in response to the transgressions of the Israelites. He says about the law that -

*... it was arranged by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. (Galatians 3)*

The law was given to Moses by Yahweh and so the mediator is Yahweh. He comes between man and the ultimate god, the father. But god is one, and when a person is united to god through the spirit they are no longer under the rule of the mediator, Yahweh, and his angels.

Paul's passage on veiling continues;

*But neither is a man apart from a woman, nor a woman apart from a man, in the Lord.  
(1 Corinthians 11)*

This is an explicit and clear reference to the spiritual union of male and female in the bridal chamber. The phrase 'in the Lord' indicates that Paul is speaking spiritually and not about worldly marriage. A person is not apart from their spiritual husband or wife 'in the Lord'. As Paul advises both men and women not to marry, his expression here is contradictory unless interpreted spiritually.

*For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. (1 Corinthians 11)*

The psychic will read this as saying that although the woman came from the man in the Garden of Eden, man is born from the woman in the world. But the pneumatic will understand it as an allusion to the female spirit coming into existence through the man and the male spirit, including Jesus himself, coming into existence through the woman. This meaning flows on naturally from the previous phrase.

After this Paul lowers his discourse to the psychic level. He uses an appeal to nature that long hair is comely on a woman but not on a man so a woman should have her head covered. He ends with a straightforward command – *"But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God"*.

The Valentinians understood that this passage referred to the veiling of Achamoth. In Gnostic myth Achamoth initially appears veiled to the Christ, her redeemer, out of modesty. Irenaeus reports that the Valentinians believed –

*the coming of the Saviour with His attendants to Achamoth is declared in like manner by him in the same Epistle [by Paul to the Corinthians], when he says, "A woman ought to have a veil upon her head, because of the angels."*

Another perspective on this passage in Paul is given by the wedding song sang by the apostle Thomas in the Gnostic work, the Acts of Thomas (not to be confused with the Gospel of Thomas). Although the Acts of Thomas is not early itself it includes a number of apparently earlier passages including the wedding song sang at a wedding feast. It relates to the mystery of the bridal chamber and gives a description of the mystic bride.

*The damsel is the daughter of light, in whom consisteth and dwelleth the proud brightness of kings, and the sight of her is delightful, she shineth with beauty and cheer. Her garments are like the flowers of spring, and from them a waft of fragrance is borne; and in the crown of her head the king is established which with his immortal food (ambrosia) nourisheth them that are founded upon him; and in her head is set truth, and with her feet she showeth forth joy.*

This gives a different meaning to the idea that the female participant of the bridal chamber ought to have 'power on her head' – meaning a sign of power or authority. In

the wedding song the king himself is established on the crown of her head. The title by which Jesus and early Christians are apparently known, Nazarene, could have been derived from the word for crown or victors wreath. The song seems to be suggesting that the king (Jesus?) is himself the crown.

The end of the song could apply to Mary herself although the twelve could have an astrological significance -

*And twelve in number are they that serve before her and are subject unto her, which have their aim and their look toward the bridegroom, that by the sight of him they may be enlightened; and for ever shall they be with her in that eternal joy, and shall be at that marriage whereto the princes are gathered together and shall attend at that banquet whereof the eternal ones are accounted worthy, and shall put on royal raiment and be clad in bright robes; and in joy and exultation shall they both be and shall glorify the Father of all, whose proud light they have received, and are enlightened by the sight of their lord; whose immortal food they have received, that hath no failing, and have drunk of the wine that giveth them neither thirst nor desire. And they have glorified and praised with the living spirit, the Father of truth and the mother of wisdom.*

The veiling of Achamoth explains a mystery in the epistles of Paul, in that the female aspect of the deity represented by Achamoth and the female spirit do not play an explicit role. Paul talks about the spirit constantly but he always studiously leaves the sex of the spirit in doubt. The Greek word, pneuma, which he uses is a neuter noun. In none of his writings about the spirit does he imply that it is male. He often calls the spirit 'the spirit of god' but this does not mean that the spirit is itself male as the Jews referred to Wisdom in the same terms as 'the Wisdom of god'.

Christianity emerged from the Jewish Wisdom tradition and Wisdom in the form of Achamoth was central to the early Christian Gnostic cults, not least the prominent Valentinians. The Valentinians themselves traced their descent directly from Paul. To many Gnostics Paul was 'the apostle'. Given the continuity of the Wisdom tradition from pre-Christian to Christian Gnostics, and the fact that the Gnostics themselves regarded Paul as the source of their school, it is clear that Paul must himself have been a follower of Wisdom. But to Paul, Wisdom was part of the 'hidden knowledge' that must be protected both from the un-initiated and from Yahweh himself. The veiling of Achamoth was symbolic of the need to protect the hidden female spirit to safeguard the purity of her beauty. So Wisdom disappears explicitly from Paul's writings, and so the mainstream church which followed Paul devalued the feminine.

As the church of Peter settled into an orthodoxy which excluded Achamoth, the epistles of Paul were edited to bring them in line with orthodox thinking. Thus Paul is made to say that women should not speak in church in a passage which is almost certainly not genuinely written by Paul. Similarly new epistles were crafted and attributed to Paul, so that Paul could appear to attack the Gnostics who revered him as their apostle. As to what passages were so obviously contrary to orthodox teachings that they had to be edited out of Paul's writings, that it is impossible to tell.

## **Simon Magus**

Now early in the Jesus movement there was a follower of Mary called Simon, a man educated in the Greek manner. Maybe this Simon is the same as mentioned in the gospels as one of the Twelve, the Simon who later became confused with Peter. Maybe he was not. Either way this Simon became ripe for the harvest, and was taken down unto the resurrection by Mary. And from the resurrection he had a wife and sister whom he called Helena. And Helena was glorious with the light.

So Mary seeing that Simon was full of the spirit sent him to Samaria to preach the good news. And there Simon taught the people about Jesus and he taught them even more about Helena and through Helena about Achamoth. For to him it was Helena that was the divine one, the spring of beauty that quenches all thirst. And in doing this he was not disobeying Mary. For Mary did not instruct her disciples to teach this and not that. Nor was any held as master above the rest, for all who had the spirit were held equal and the only truth recognised by any of them was the truth of god as revealed by their spirit.

And Simon was full of the spirit as he preached and the Samaritans held him as a great one. And this is what Simon spoke to them.

“And the father came from the light that filled the all. And this one, the father was called the unbegotten, for he was born from none but came into being, motherless and fatherless from the light.”

Thus it says in the Gospel of the Twin:

*Jesus said: When you see him who was not born of woman, throw yourselves down upon your face and worship him. He is your Father.*

Simon continued. “The father was at the beginning before time, and is now, and will be at the end after time. He is one who stood, the one who stands and the one who will stand and all three are one. For the beginning is the same as the end and they are the same as now and all times exist as a simultaneity.”

And some of the learned fellows of Simon asked “But how can all times exist at the same time. Is there not a future which is dark and unknown?”

“Time is an illusion of this world, an illusion of this age. In this world we are trapped by time – to our worldly self the future is a blank unknown. But to the spirit that exists in the father there is no time. The beginning and the end are one. For this reason the spirit can bring to us things of the future which men call the gift of prophecy. Yet the veil is never completely rendered until our bodies die and we are only spirit.”

“In this world we know that one thing does follow another. So we may change things that are in the future but not the past. But all such change is an illusion. For all things,

past and future do exist in the father. So if you are one who stands then you will have stood and you will stand. And if you are not one who stands then you will never have stood and will never stand. For all potentially are standing ones yet few indeed are those who do actually stand.”

And they asked him “How do we become standing ones like you!”

And he said to them, “Through the resurrection and the life, through the gift of the spirit. Then you shall be standing ones! You are all children of the father. And being children of the father you are the father. You are gods.”

And Simon’s disciples murmured. “How can this be – we are gods! How can we be the Father! Surely he blasphemes!”

But Simon unperturbed went on. “You too are like the father for he made you in his image. The spirit is a single point yet it opens up into the infinity of the father. The spirit is the father and you who have the spirit are the father!”

The Samaritans called Simon the standing one. The Gospel of the Twin refers to how few will be the standing ones:

*Jesus said: I shall choose you, one out of a thousand, and two out of ten thousand, and they shall stand as a single one.*

In the Gospel of the Twin are references to ‘he who stood, stands and will stand’ in two sayings.

*For there are many first who shall be last, and they shall become a single one.*

The first is the ‘he who stood’, the last is ‘he who will stand’. The first becomes the last if the person is united with their spirit to become a ‘standing one’. As a standing one the circle is complete and they become single - ‘he who stood, stands and will stand’. Also -

*The disciples said to Jesus: Tell us how our end shall be. Jesus said: Have you then discovered the beginning, that you seek after the end? For where the beginning is, there shall the end be. Blessed is he who shall stand in the beginning, and he shall know the end and shall not taste of death.*

Here again is the circle – the end is the same as the beginning. A person who stands in the beginning ‘he who stood’ knows the end – he is the same as ‘he who will stand’.

Now the author of the gospel of Mathew had the saying in front of him from The Gospel of the Twin - *For there are many first who shall be last, and they shall become a single one.* ‘What does this mean?’ he asked himself. Lacking spiritual discernment he came to the conclusion that those who are the first to be converted will be the last in the kingdom of heaven but that all, first or last, shall eventually be united. So he made up a parable



about a man hiring labourers for his vineyard. Those who came in the third hour are paid the same as those who came in the eleventh hour. And at the end of the day the workers are paid in reverse with the latecomers being rewarded first. But the story is absurd for no vineyard owner would pay men the same for doing one hour of work as for doing several hours of work. And the parable does not explain the conclusion:

*So the last shall be first, and the first last, for many are called, and few are chosen.  
(Mathew 20)*

For even if all are paid the same there is no reason why the latecomers should be paid first. The author of Mathew does not understand the saying he is reporting. The chosen are those of the spirit whereas the called are those who believe. The statement 'the last shall be first and the first last' applies to the chosen. They exist before time and they exist after time and the first existence is the same as the last existence. As it says in the Gospel of the Twin:

*Blessed is he who was before he came into being.*

Paul also is familiar with the concept of 'he who stands'. In his epistles he is constantly using the word 'stand' to refer to the possession of grace of faith:

- *this grace in which we have stood (Romans 5)*
- *to his own master he doth stand or fall; and he shall be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. (Romans 14)*
- *so that he who is thinking to stand -- let him observe, lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10)*
- *Watch you, stand in the faith; be men, be strong; (1 Corinthians 16)*
- *for by the faith you stand. (2 Corinthians 1)*
- *stand, and be not held fast again by a yoke of servitude (Galatians 5)*
- *that you stand fast in one spirit (Philippians 1)*
- *so stand you in the Lord (Philippians 4)*
- *that you may stand perfect and made full in all the will of God (Colossians 4)*
- *because now we live, if you may stand fast in the Lord (Thessalonians 3)*

One revealing use of these phrases is immediately before his account of the resurrection appearances:

*And I make known to you, brethren, the good news that I proclaimed to you, which also you did receive, in which also you have stood, (1 Corinthians 15) ...*

And Simon continued to teach to his disciples. "I tell you a secret. The father is not one fold but two fold, a hermaphrodite that contains both male and female. And in the beginning the father was neither male nor female, But one part of the father, Achamoth , the female principle, splitting from the father perceived him as being male. Thus we the sons and daughters of Achamoth see the father as male. Yet in his true nature Achamoth and he are one and they are the parents."

“And you too, who have been made in the image of the father, have been made hermaphrodite. For in truth none of you, neither man nor woman, is male or female. But those of you being born men in this world, your male nature separating from your spiritual body, perceives that spiritual body as being female. And those of you being born women, your female nature separating from your spiritual body, perceives that spiritual body as being male.”

“But when male and female, higher and lower, are united in the bridal chamber, man and woman become again whole and hermaphrodite.”

Hyppolitus also records how Simon believed that God formed man with a twofold male-female nature:

*And He formed him not un compounded, but twofold, according to (His own) image and likeness. Now the image is the Spirit that is wafted over the water; and whosoever is not fashioned into a figure of this, will perish with the world, inasmuch as he continues only potentially, and does [not] exist actually.*

The spirit is in the image of God and must be recovered for a person to find eternal life – to exist actually rather than potentially. God the father is himself twofold in nature being hermaphrodite:

*But in this is a father who sustains all things, and nourishes things that have beginning and end. This is he who stood, stands, and will stand, being an hermaphrodite power according to the pre-existent indefinite power, which has neither beginning nor end.*

The concept of entering the kingdom of god by returning to hermaphrodite wholeness is the meaning of a saying in the Gospel of the Twin:

*When you make the two one, and when you make the inside as the outside, and the outside as the inside, and the upper as the lower; and when you make the male and the female into a single one, that the male be not male and the female female; when you make eyes in the place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, an image in place of an image, then shall you enter the kingdom.*

The author of Mark when writing his gospel considered this saying of the Gospel of the Twin. He could not understand it and his version is highly confused and quite absurd. He interpreted it as meaning that a person is better to sacrifice an eye, hand or foot in order to enter the kingdom:

*And if your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into the life maimed, than having two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.*

*And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into the life lame, than having two feet to be cast into hell, to the unquenchable fire, where their*

*worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.*

*And if your eye may cause you to stumble, cast it out; it is better to enter one-eyed into the kingdom of god, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire, where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. (Mark 9)*

Mark also has a miracle story in which a man with a withered hand has his hand cured and made whole. This is another example of a 'hand in place of hand'.

Now Simon told the Samaritans many stories about Jesus, and about Mary, and Peter. Yet his followers always held himself, Simon as their leader. And many of these stories, which Simon had told them, became confused with the person of Simon himself and with his spirit Helena. And many said he was the same as the mysterious Peter who was revered by all but whom no one seemed to have met except those initiated into the inner mysteries and who would never talk about him. Maybe this idea that Simon was Peter spread from the Samaritans to the Jews and later, after both Simon and Mary were dead, gave rise among some of the Jewish followers of Jesus to the belief that Peter had been the name given to the disciple Simon, a belief that the author of Mark seized upon when writing his gospel.

After Simon died the Samaritans began to confuse him with Jesus. And many remembered the words of Simon, how he had said that the standing one was the same as the father. As Simon was called "the standing one" they thought that the father had come down to Samaria in the form of Simon just as the son had descended to the Jews in the form of Jesus. For those of Samaria and Judea always despised each other and the Samaritans longed to outdo the Jews. Because of these beliefs the Samaritan followers of Simon came into enmity with the other followers of Jesus. And no longer did the Samaritans say that Simon was the same as Peter, but they took the stories about Jesus and Mary and Peter and applied them to Simon and Helena.

Over time the other followers of Jesus completely forgot that Simon the Samaritan was a disciple of Mary and maybe the same as Simon Peter. Instead he became the evil magician Simon Magus. In the Acts of the Apostles Simon Magus is a magician who attempts to buy the power of giving the Holy Spirit from Peter. He is introduced as doing magical deeds in Samaria:

*And a certain man, by name Simon, was in the city before [Phillip] using magic, and amazing the nation of Samaria, saying himself to be a certain great one, to whom they all gave heed, from small unto great, saying, 'This one is the great power of God;' and they gave heed to him because of his having for a long time amazed them with deeds of magic. (Acts 8)*

He is converted by Phillip and baptised. When John and Peter visit Samaria he is amazed to see them give the spirit to others by the laying on of hands. Simon brings money to Peter and asks him to give him the power of laying on of hands so that he can give the spirit to whomever he wills. But Peter spurns his offer and tells him to repent his evil ways.

The story as it stands is fiction but it records the conflict that exists between the followers of Simon and the other followers of Jesus. Even to his enemies Simon was esteemed a powerful figure. There was a recollection that he was able to give the spirit to people in large numbers. The Acts tries to refute this reputation by saying, “no he did not really have this power but just tried to buy it from Peter.”

The pseudo-Clementine writings preserve a recollection that Simon was a powerful harvester in a curious story:

*In short, ' says he [Simon Magus], 'once when my mother Rachel ordered me to go to the field to reap, and I saw a sickle lying, I ordered it to go and reap; and it reaped ten times more than the others. Lately, I produced many new sprouts from the earth, and made them bear leaves and produce fruit in a moment; and the nearest mountain I successfully bored through.'*

This is a clear reference to the harvest of the resurrection of the soul. Simon has been sowing and reaping. The new sprouts refer to the reborn spirit. The boring through of the mountain seems to be a reference to the descent to the underworld. The reaction of those to whom Simon is speaking is also informative – they say that Simon is lying because these things had been from the days of their fathers and not done recently! This suggests that there were similar stories told about Peter and the other disciples.

Irenaeus gives more detail about Simon and Helena:

*Now this Simon of Samaria, from whom all sorts of heresies derive their origin, formed his sect out of the following materials:--Having redeemed from slavery at Tyre, a city of Phoenicia, a certain woman named Helena, he was in the habit of carrying her about with him, declaring that this woman was the first conception of his mind, the mother of all, by whom, in the beginning, he conceived in his mind [the thought] of forming angels and archangels.*

Irenaeus describes how this woman was his Ennoea meaning first thought. She descended to the lower regions of space and was detained there by the powers and angels. She suffered at their hands and was detained in human body, passing from body to body, and being incarnated among other forms as Helen of Troy. Eventually she descended to the condition of a common prostitute. She was then found and redeemed from slavery by Simon.

It is clear from Irenaeus' description that Helena is a form of Achamoth. She is Simon's spirit. Just as Jesus is the male spirit of a woman so Helena is the female spirit of a man. And just as Jesus was considered by many to be a real man so Helena was considered by many to be a real woman. This belief that Helena had been a real woman was held by three church fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Hyppolitus. As Hyppolitus records:

*And after having thus redeemed her, he was in the habit of conducting her about with himself, alleging that this (girl) was the lost sheep, and affirming himself to be the Power above all things. But the filthy fellow, becoming enamoured of this miserable woman called Helen, purchased her (as his slave), and enjoyed her person. He, (however,) was likewise moved with shame towards his disciples, and concocted this figment.*

The pseudo Clementine account of the duel between Simon Magus and Peter offers some intriguing information about Simon – most of it ludicrously distorted. It records Simon's magical powers, many of which are misunderstandings of Gnostic practice. For example he is recorded as being to make himself invisible to those who would lay hold of him – a clear reference to the Gnostic belief that the spirit of the Gnostic is invisible to the evil powers on its ascent to heaven. There is also the power to throw himself off mountains and be borne unhurt to the ground – a reference which echoes the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. In these stories Helena has become 'Luna' who is said to be a form of Wisdom (Achamoth). An intriguing story is told about Luna:

*Once, when this Luna of his was in a certain tower, a great multitude had assembled to see her, and were standing around the tower on all sides; but she was seen by all the people to lean forward, and to look out through all the windows of that tower.*

Now this story is descended from a saying like this:

“The spirit in the Magdalene is visible to all who stand no matter where they be.”

For the meaning of the Magdalene is the tower, and the Magdalene's spirit Jesus has been replaced by Simon Magus's spirit, here called Luna. And those who stand are those with the spirit but has been literally interpreted as people standing around the tower. But what the saying means is that Jesus is visible to all who have the spirit.

There is another story that may refer to Mary. In the pseudo-Clementine Simon admits that he does magic by means of -

*“the soul of a boy, unsullied and violently slain, and invoked by unutterable adjurations, to assist me; and by it all is done that I command.”*

He adds why the human soul has such power:

*'I would have you know this, that the soul of man holds the next place after God, when once it is set free from the darkness of his body. And immediately it acquires prescience: wherefore it is invoked for necromancy.'*

The boy has originally been created by Simon out of air and is a nobler work than that of god the creator. Then

*“again I unmade him and restored him to air, but not until I had placed his picture and image in my bed-chamber, as a proof and memorial of my work.”*

In this account is preserved a rare recollection that the image of the human soul is in the form of a dead child. The human soul, represented by the boy, is created more perfect (out of air rather than earth) than Yahweh could make it. Yahweh was believed by Gnostics to be the demiurge or lower god, as opposed to the higher god, 'the father'. Once the soul is released from darkness, so that it becomes a spirit, it possesses magical powers including the gift of fore knowledge. After the souls redemption, represented here by it returning to air, the image of the spirit dwells in the bridal chamber. This is represented in corrupted form as a 'bed-chamber'. All these elements have been put into a literal story of a magician doing necromancy using the soul of a murdered boy.

In this story the soul image is male. It does not belong to Simon, a man, because his spirit, Helena is female. Although it could apply to any female 'standing one' there is a strong possibility that it is derived from stories originally told about Mary. In this case the dead boy is Mary's soul who is resurrected in the form of the man in white seen at the tomb in the resurrection account who turns out to be Jesus.

Similarly many stories that are told about Simon Magus that relate to Jesus. For example Simon is recorded as having had himself buried in Rome believing that he would be resurrected after three days like Jesus – but in Simon's case this did not work and he stayed in his grave. Like Jesus he is recorded as having a virgin birth and to be a supernatural being who appeared as a man among men.

What about the tradition that Helena had been redeemed in a brothel in Tyre? If it is believed that Mary was a prostitute then maybe Simon met Mary in that brothel very shortly after the resurrection of Jesus and that meeting was to lead to the initiation of Simon. It is possible that the first disciples may have included ex-clients of a prostitute Mary and that Simon was one of these.

But most likely this is nonsense. Calling Helena a prostitute recalls the prostitution of Achamoth and the role of Tyre, a seaport and a symbol of prostitution, is to represent the prostitution of the soul in the realm of the flesh. There is detail which supports this interpretation in Hyppolitus' account of the finding of Helena:

*But the angels and the powers below--who, he says, created the world--caused the transference from one body to another of (Helen's soul); and subsequently she stood on the roof of a house in Tyre, a city of Phoenicia, and on going down thither (Simon professed to have) found her. For he stated that, principally for the purpose of searching after this (woman), he had arrived (in Tyre), in order that he might rescue her from bondage.*

The soul comes down to the roof of the brothel from the air or from heaven suggests that the brothel is not supposed to be taken literally but stands for the world.

The followers of Simon Magus thrived and were to provide competition with Christians for many years before being reabsorbed into the Christian Gnostic movement. The

stories we have of Simon Magus date from this era of competition and are attempts to blacken the name of the followers of Simon based upon misreading and distortions of the stores that the followers of Simon themselves told, which in turn are based upon distortions of the stories often originally told about Jesus and Mary. Thus in Simon we see the truth reflected and refracted through many obscuring layers.

## **The passing of Mary**

When did the body of Mary die and her spirit Jesus pass into the light? In the gospels the ministry of Jesus starts when he is thirty and lasts only a few years. But Irenaeus records that the ministry of Jesus lasted as long as twenty years – between the ages of thirty and fifty. It is doubtful if he would have given this information unless he had good reason to believe it was true. It is in glaring contradiction to the gospel account of a short ministry leading to the crucifixion. However there is also a suggestion in the Gospel of John that there was a tradition that Jesus was close to fifty by the end of his ministry:

*The Jews, said to him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?' (John 8)*

These accounts can be reconciled once we realise that the ages refer to Mary and that the crucifixion took place at the start of the ministry and not the end. The gospels understand correctly that both the start of the ministry and crucifixion took place under Pontius Pilate (AD 26-36) and that 'Jesus' was around thirty at both these events. Not understanding they are the same event they are forced to compact the ministry of Jesus into a very short span of time. That collector of facts, Irenaeus, has another source of information about the length of the ministry which he gives correctly thus contradicting the gospels.

If the ages apply to Mary then she was born 4BC-6AD, had her resurrection experience marking the start of her ministry in 26-36AD and died twenty years later 46-56AD. Most likely she died in the fourteen years between Paul's first and second visits to Jerusalem. She would then be already dead when Paul was writing his epistles.

The death of Mary is the same as the ascension of Jesus. The elaborate description of the apostles watching Jesus fly into the air given in the Acts is fiction. The gospel of Mark puts it simply:

*So then after the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. (Mark 16)*

There is no information about the place, time and manner of this event. The forty days between the resurrection and the ascension is symbolic only. Luke does tell us that the ascension took place 'in the vicinity of Bethany'. Thus the same name Bethany, meaning "House of affliction" is given as for the resurrection of Lazarus and the descent of the Holy Spirit into Jesus. Since Bethany signifies the place of the dead this shows that Luke preserves the recollection that the ascension of Jesus was via a death. In this case the death is not the symbolic death of Jesus but the actual bodily death of Mary.

The death of Mary/Cephas must have been a cataclysmic event for the early Christian church. Is there no trace of it at all? In one place only is there a hint. At the end of John it is recorded about the disciple whom Jesus loved that it was said among the brethren that he should not die. The Gospel of John tries to explain that this was what not what



Jesus actually said. Why is John so keen to make this point? By the time that John was written this disciple must have been dead (even though John purports to have been written by the disciple!) and that this had caused confusion among the Christian church because many expected him not to die until Jesus came in glory. The disciple whom Jesus loved is another identity of Mary. As the embodiment of Jesus it is easy to see why many believed that Mary would not die until Jesus came in his spiritual body in glory and why the death of Mary would cause such consternation.

## **PART 4 – THE MYSTERIES**

### **The soul in Hades**

And they asked Mary, “Tell us about the soul”. So she spoke to them thus.

“The soul is like a young girl dwelling in a house lost in the land of darkness. Long ago she and you would play as one, as little brother and sister, in the days of your innocence. But as you entered into manhood the dark ones grew strong within you and it was necessary to build a wall between you and the devils within. She was entombed on the other side of that wall.”

“She, your soul, is that within you which is eternal. For your mind does not end with what is material but extends into the reality that is god. In that place things are not as they seem and that which is really part of you is perceived as a separate being, for the reality of god is alien to one bound by the fetters of time. For you men she is the form of a young girl, a child who went asleep long ago.”

“The soul within is dead. Yet the secret is this, that she is not really dead but sleeping. She is a princess who must sleep for a hundred years under a curse. She is a beautiful girl child lying in a glass coffin apparently dead but really in a deep, deep sleep. She is a grail, the female receptacle of the blood of the spirit, long lost and much sought by men. She will be awakened by the good prince, the son of the most high one. In that awakening you will be both redeemer and redeemed.”

“That place where she dwells is called many names, but the Greeks call it Hades. It is within you and it is without. It is the opposite of the kingdom of heaven and a dark twin to the Kingdom. It is the abode of devils and the land of the dead. It is the pit within from which creep up dark forms that will attempt to rule you and destroy you.”

“That place, the land of the dead is called the middle, for it comes between you and god. Everything that comes from god must pass through the middle unless you are reborn. And in that middle many of the messages from god are lost and distorted, turned even so that good becomes evil. But if your soul is reborn then no longer do the messages pass through that place. Instead you are illuminated by god’s light, which is the spirit, and with that light you will see. Such a one has no need for rules, for the rule of god shines forth from their heart.”

“Yet if you are not reborn then your soul will continue to dwell in Hades for all eternity. And there it will be tortured by devils. And the torturing devils are these – greed, hatred, jealousy, lust, selfishness, pride, anger; the cruelty and fear that occupy the darkness in the heart of man. For your soul suffers in the middle place. It knows not the light of the

world but is lost among your dark thoughts as in a nightmare. And being eternal your soul will suffer eternally.”

“But the soul can also be awakened little by little. For the soul that is the light buried deep within will respond to the good deeds that you do. And she will recognise the teachings or goodness, the parables and outer mysteries and will grow brighter in response to them, and convey to you a sense of their rightness. And most of all she will respond to the ultimate mystery of the crucifixion and resurrection. That is why we baptise those who are still dead, as even the dead shall be saved if they believe and act on that belief.”

Thus the did the Gnostics refer to those who had not been awakened as ‘the dead’ – for their soul dwells in Hades even as they go about their daily business as the puppets of their animal nature. Paul shared the same belief. In his first epistle to the Corinthians Paul addresses those who say there is no resurrection from the dead. In his defence he makes a reference to baptism for the dead:

*Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? (1 Corinthians 15)*

This passage is inexplicable in terms of the church of belief. How can anyone be baptised for the dead? However it makes sense once it is understood that ‘the dead’ are the souls of the psychics. Paul is saying that if the dead are not resurrected at the end of time then it is useless to baptise psychic Christians. Paul’s whole mission is aimed at redeeming the psychics because he believes that at the end of time, psychics and pneumatics alike will enter into a new ‘spiritual’ body. How could such a fundamental Christian belief as the resurrection ever have been questioned within the church? The people questioning must be pneumatic Christians who understand the resurrection as something that happens within life. They are arguing that psychic Christians who never experience the resurrection within life will not experience it after death. Paul is addressing this belief in a passage largely couched in literalist terms for the benefit of psychic Christians but also containing elements that only the pneumatic will understand. He is telling these pneumatics not to disturb the faith and hope of the psychics. He is also giving his own theology that the pneumatic resurrection is just a forerunner of the real event - the resurrection at the end of time in which both pneumatics and psychics will share. This is tied in with Paul’s belief that Christ will return in his real, spiritual, body. For just as Christ first appeared as a spirit of a person, Mary, and will come again in a ‘spiritual’ body, so will the spirit of each pneumatic return in a similar way. At this time they will be joined by the psychics. As he writes:

*Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15)*

This is Paul’s interpretation but it is not Mary’s. As it says in the Gospel of the Twin:

*His disciples said to him: On what day will the kingdom come? Jesus said: It comes not with observation. They will not say: Lo, here! or: Lo, there! But the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it.*

For Mary there is no coming of Jesus in a spiritual body – for time is an illusion. In god there is no time, and in god all times are one. A person is eternal in their essence. The resurrection is bringing the eternal inner spirit to rule in the body and to consume in the white fire of the spirit what is mortal. It is not transforming the mortal body into the eternal realm.

And they said to Mary, “Tell us about the Pearl”.

“The pearl is what you must find. The pearl is the thing that is most precious to you yet it has been lost in the mud. The pearl is a bride. The pearl is your soul.”

And she told them a story thus.

“Once a person wished to hide a treasure in the form of a pearl. He wished to hide it well so that only those who were deserving of the pearl should find it. So he hid that pearl in the last place that anyone would think of looking for it.”

“He hid it inside so that none who knew only the things of this world should find it. He gave the keys of knowledge to one dwelling in the same house so that none who knew only ‘I’ should find it. He hid it in darkness so that none who would only look in the light should find it. He hid it among devils so that none who were ruled by devils should find it. He placed a serpent to guard the pearl, and the name of that serpent was fear, so that none who lacked courage should find it. He placed the pearl in the place which the sons and daughters of man most dread and he gave the pearl that form which they would least wish to look upon.”

“Then that pearl was well hid.”

“Tell us more!” they implored her. “Tell us how to find the pearl!”

But she was quiet. “I have already said more than enough” was all she would add.

## **The crucifixion**

Jesus was strong in Mary and he spoke to his followers.

“In times past you desired to hear these words which I speak to you. The time will come when you will seek me and will not find me.”

“Sons and daughters of men, you are saved by my cross. It is my cross that is the life. It is my cross that will defeat death, for it is greater than the things of death, the things of this world. It is only through bearing my cross that you shall live. This is my mystery of mysteries.”

“You, who would be reborn must spread out your arms and accept my cross. With me you shall hang upon the tree. You shall feel my pain, my sorrow, my grief. You will taste my blood upon my lips, you will suffer the nails tearing my flesh, the agony of each breath. You will go down to the tomb with me and lie in the bitter coldness of death. My way is a dark way and is traced in pain and tears. Yet I take the pain from you as I take death from you. And after dark comes the morning, after winter the spring.”

“I am thee and you are mine. For my cross is man. My cross is the accumulated suffering and pain of mankind, my cross is the torture of soul bound to matter, and my cross is the promise of the redemption.”

“It is not enough to believe. It is not enough to construct arguments and disputations or to interpret the truth through clever metaphors. It is not enough to think or to talk or to pray or to do good deeds. For you must experience my pain, know my sacrifice. If you be man then you must be crucified with me in reality, not the reality of this world on a cross of wood, but in my reality. For just as woman must bear the burden of birth through life, so man must bear the burden of birth through death. And if you be woman you must witness my pain at the foot of my cross, and experience my suffering through a woman’s love. And afterwards you must come down with me into the tomb to anoint me and lay your head against my icy breast and sob out your grief.”

“I am the covenant between you and god. Without that covenant you are nothing. You mate and gather money to yourself, and take your pleasures and bring up your children and in all these things you are animals. You are bound to death and that death is your bitter sorrow, for within you is that which is eternal and which will suffer eternally. But I am your redemption. Drink and you shall live and in living you shall know the joy of being complete, of being what you were created for. You are not of this world, sons and daughters of man. You must return home and dwell in the kingdom of your parents.”

After that he was silent and spoke to them no more.